1

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

MANGA BY

AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY

NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY

HIKARU NAKAMURA

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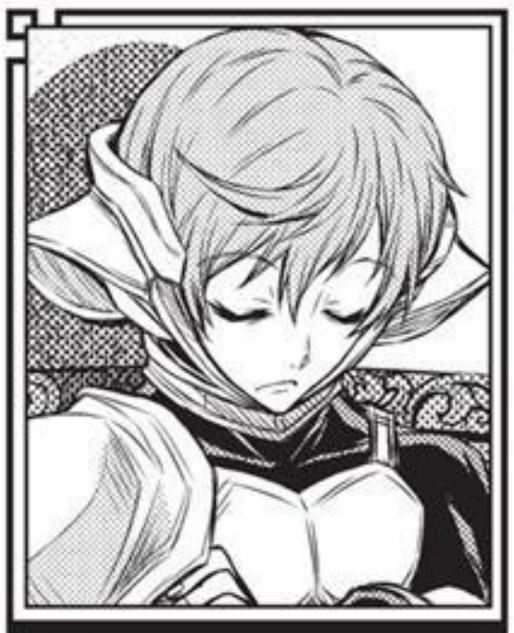
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The Fighter of the Tiger

TORA

Kills with Drunken Power



The Fighter of the Rat

NEZUMI

Kills Inexorably



The Fighter of the Rabbit

USAGI

Kills with Distinction



The Fighter of the Ox

USHII

Just Kills

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

THE TWELVE FIGHTERS

1

The Zodiac War is held every twelve years.

2

Twelve fierce warriors take on the names of the Zodiac.

3

The sole victor will be granted any single wish.

4

The twelve warriors each possess unique superpowers.





The Fighter of the Dog

DOTSUKU

Kills with Bites



The Fighter of the Monkey

SHARYŪ

Kills in Peace



The Fighter of the Horse

UUMA

Kills in Silence



The Fighter of the Dragon

TATSUMI BROTHER, the Elder

Kills for Money



The Fighter of the Boar

INŌNOSHISHI

Kills in Abundance



The Fighter of the Chicken

NIWATORI

Kills by Pecks



The Fighter of the Sheep

HITSUJII

Kills with Deception



The Fighter of the Snake

TATSUMI BROTHER, the Younger

Kills for Money

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	The Twelve	005
CHAPTER 2	Rabbit, Snake, Chicken, Dog, Boar	075
CHAPTER 3	Chicken, Dog, Boar	127
CHAPTER 4	Rat, Monkey, Chicken, Boar	151

BOOM

CHAPTER ONE

THE TWELVE

THUK THUK THUK THUK



THE ZODIAC WAR IS HELD ONCE EVERY TWELVE YEARS.

WISH

ZOOM

TWELVE FIERCE WARRIORS TAKE ON THE NAMES OF THE ZODIAC...

ZOOM

GRRR

GRRR

GRRR

...AND STAKE THEIR LIVES AND SOULS IN A FORMAL BATTLE TO THE DEATH.

ガキン

THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF THIS BATTLE...

...IS GRANTED ONE WISH— ANY WISH— OF THEIR CHOOSING.


OH
THIS CITY'S COM-PLETELY DARK.

THE TWELFTH ZODIAC WAR.

TO THINK THAT FOR THE SAKE OF THIS TOURNAMENT...

BIP

BIP

IT SEEMS ONE WARRIOR HASN'T ARRIVED YET.

TMD

TMD

TMD

...THEY'D WIPE OUT A CITY OF 500,000 PEOPLE.

WOO

THAT ALONE DEMONSTRATES THE ZODIAC WAR'S REACH.

...SHE IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, ONE OF THE TOP CONTENDERS.

KSHH

WITH HER PREDECESSOR AS THE PREVIOUS CHAMPION ...

SHI

INŌNO-SHISHI, THE FIGHTER OF THE BOAR!

AISHŪ AND INOCHIGOI— "LOST LOVE" AND "NO MERCY."

HER WEAPONS OF CHOICE ARE TWO MACHINE GUNS.

VWOOOM

TD

TD

TD

TD

TD

REAL NAME, TOSHIKO INŌ. BORN ON APRIL 4.

SHE'S 176 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 60 KILOGRAMS.

SHE HAS A FATHER, A MOTHER AND A YOUNGER SISTER.

SHE IS THE HEIRESS OF A DISTINGUISHED FAMILY WITH A HISTORY THAT GOES BACK OVER THREE CENTURIES.

I WOULDN'T WANT TO UPSET TRADITION, AFTER ALL.

THE BOAR ALWAYS ARRIVES LAST.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
KLAK
KLAK
HUFF
HUFF
RATAT
KRASH
THUD
BLAM BLAM
BOOM

!!

ASH

SH

KR

AK

TH

WK

SK

HH

HER FATHER'S PARENTING STYLE WAS SO SEVERE SOME WOULD CALL IT **CRUEL** AND ABUSIVE...

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR HANDS FREE! YOU NEED TO BE READY TO REACT QUICKLY ON A BATTLEFIELD!

BAM

BAM

FADE IN

THIS COLOR LOOKS GREAT ON YOU.

OH, AND SO DOES THIS ONE.

AND THIS ONE TOO.

...WHILE HER MOTHER TOOK **DOTING** TO NEW EXTREMES.

AND THIS ONE!

AND THIS ONE.

TP

TP

TP

TP

AND MOTHER ...

FATHER ...

...I WILL ALWAYS ACT WITH ELE-GANCE.

...TO BE THE MOST PREPARED, I WILL ALWAYS KEEP MY WEAPONS IN HAND.

...SHE LEARNED HOW TO APPEASE THEM BOTH IN EQUAL MEASURE.

RAISED BY PARENTS WHO PULLED HER IN OPPOSITE DIREC-TIONS...

TMP

TMP

TMP

TMP

KR
EEEEEEK

KLAK

I TRUST YOUR WAIT HAS BEEN PLEASANT.

GOOD EVENING, EVERY-ONE.

I AM BOAR.

BAM



MORE FAMILIAR FACES HERE THAN I EXPECTED.

KR

EVERY-ONE'S HERE.

HUFF

HUFF

TP

TP

TP

I DOUBT ANY OF THESE WARRIORS WILL BE INTIMIDATED BY MY MACHINE GUNS.

OH WELL.

"I ASSUME THIS MEANS YOU WON'T MIND FACING MORE THAN ONE OPPONENT."

"DON'T WORRY, I WON'T LET YOU DIE!!"

...WHO JUST KILLS.

USHII, THE FIGHTER OF THE OX...

...WHO KILLS WITH DRUNKEN POWER.

TORA, THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER...

"I DON'T NEED THAT ANYMORE. JUST...DO ME A FAVOR."

"I CAN DRINK ALL THE SAKE I WANT AND BE JUST FINE."

"WE CAN DO THIS! WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE END!"

...WHO KILLS BY PECKS.

NIWATORI, THE FIGHTER OF THE CHICKEN...

"I'M GLAD THAT WE'RE ABLE TO HAVE A REAL CONVER-SATION."

"FOR EVERY GREAT POWER, THERE IS A CORRECT WAY TO USE IT."

...WHO KILLS IN PEACE.

SHARYŪ, THE FIGHTER OF THE MONKEY...

...WHO KILLS WITH DECEP-TION.

HITSUJI, THE FIGHTER OF THE SHEEP...

...WHO KILLS IN BITES.

DOTSUKU, THE FIGHTER OF THE DOG...

"WITH MY SPECIAL POWER, I CAN MANIPULATE QUANTUM TUNNELS AT WILL AND ENABLE OBJECTS OF MY CHOOSING TO PASS THROUGH SOLID MATTER."

"STEADY YOURSELF. CONTROL IT."

"MY BROTHER IS CERTAINLY BEING PUT TO GOOD USE."

...WHO KILL FOR MONEY.

THE TATSUMI BROTHERS, FIGHTERS OF THE DRAGON AND THE SNAKE...

"..."

...WHO KILLS IN SILENCE.

UUMA, THE FIGHTER OF THE HORSE...

"IF WE DON'T GET SOME LIGHT IN HERE, I'M GONNA FALL ASLEEP."

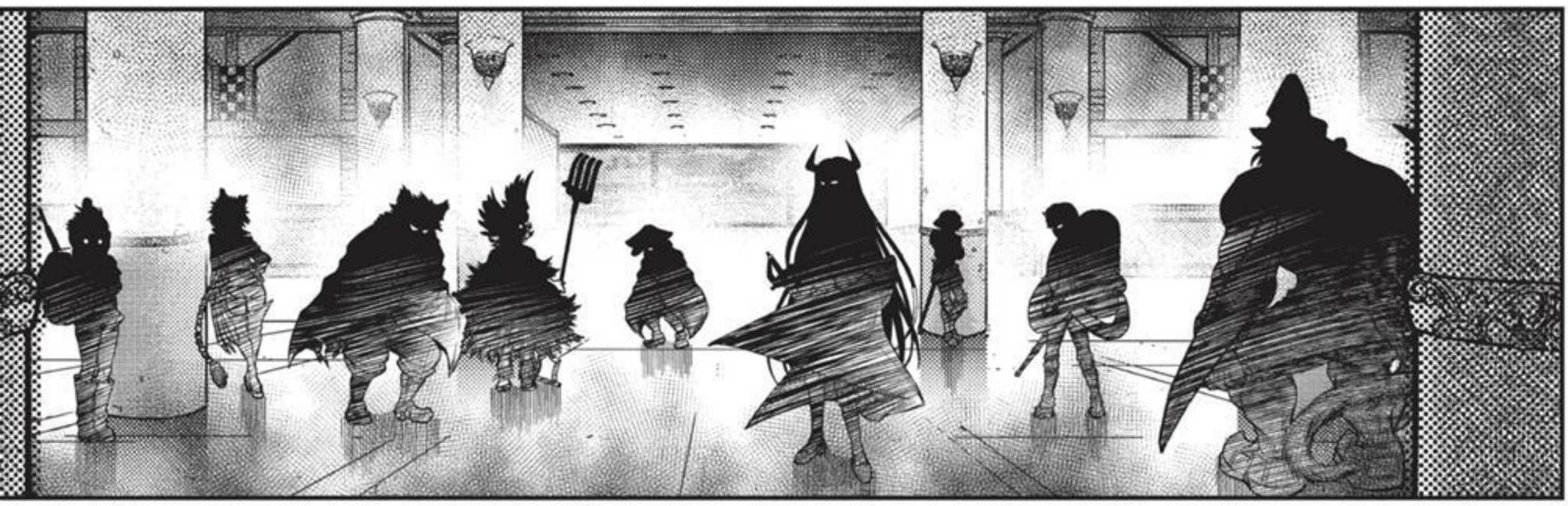
...WHO KILLS INEXORABLY.

NEZUMI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT...

AND THE LAST TO ARRIVE...

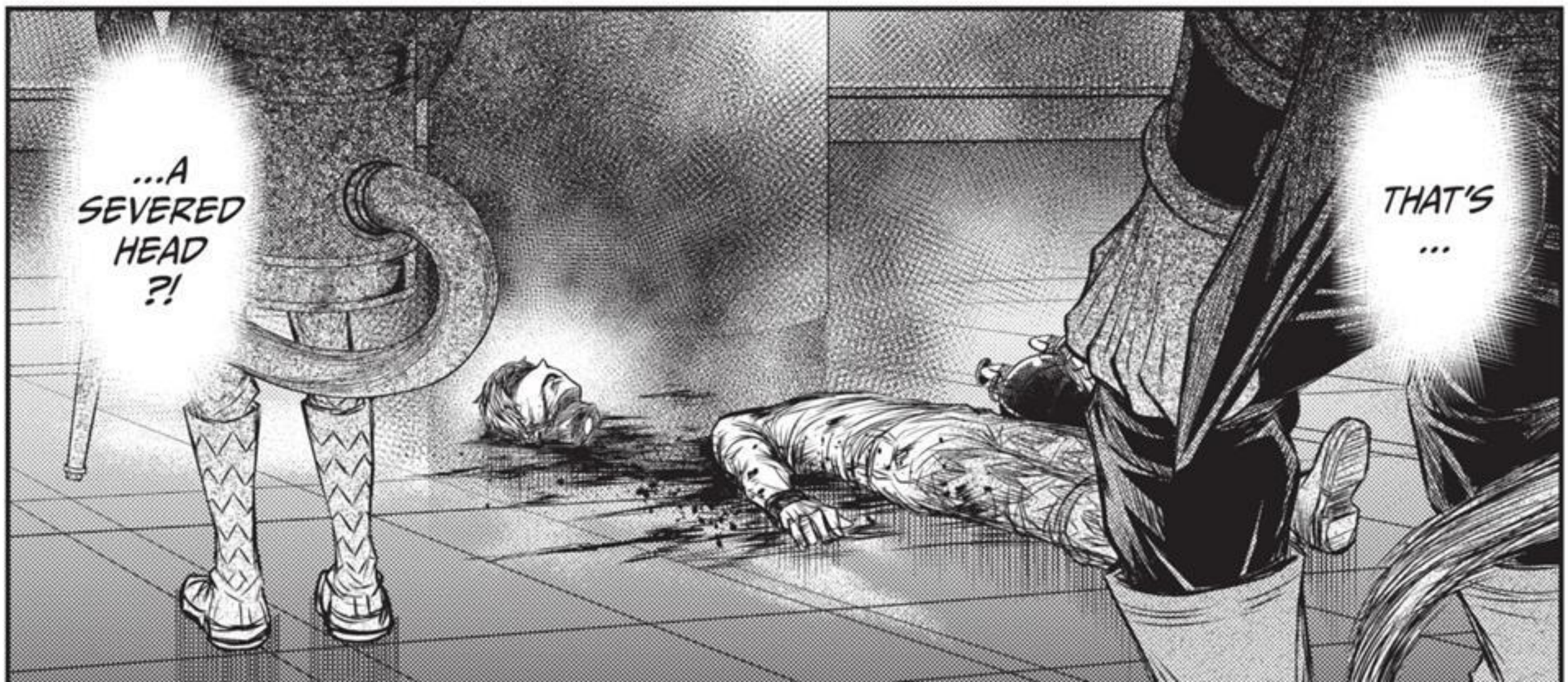
...WHO KILLS IN ABUN-DANCE.

INŌNO-SHISHI, THE FIGHTER OF THE BOAR...






!!


...A SEVERED HEAD ?!
THAT'S ...

...HE GOT HIMSELF KILLED BEFORE WE EVEN STARTED.

OH? WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

LOOKS LIKE ONE FIGHTER WAS SO *CARELESS*...

DRM

DRM

DRM

DRM

PLIP

PLIP

HOW CAN THIS BE?

WHO COULD'VE DONE IT?

...WHO KILLS WITH DISTINCTION.

USAGI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT...

USAGI

DON'T GO ACCUSING ANYONE...

...WHEN YOU DON'T GOT ANY PROOF!

I DIDN'T DO IT! IT WASN'T ME!

SWF

SWF

WELCOME, FIGHTERS.

FASH

...IS PROOF ENOUGH...

GULP

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT BLOOD-DRENCHED BLADE...

SW

...WE SHALL COMMENCE ...

NOW THAT EVERYONE HAS ARRIVED...

...THE *TWELFTH ZODIAC WAR.*

!!

EVERY-
BODY!

CLAP
YOUR
HANDS
!!

KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP
KL
AP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

I'M PLEASED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAIN-TANCES.

I AM DUODECUPLE, AND I'VE BEEN GIVEN THE HONOR OF BEING THE REFEREE FOR THIS GREAT BATTLE.

!!

FWSH

SW

F

BOW

HE'S GOING TO BE REPORTING ON THIS TOURNAMENT. DON'T PAY HIM ANY MIND.

THIS MAN HERE IS NAVI.

THAT SWORDS-MAN...

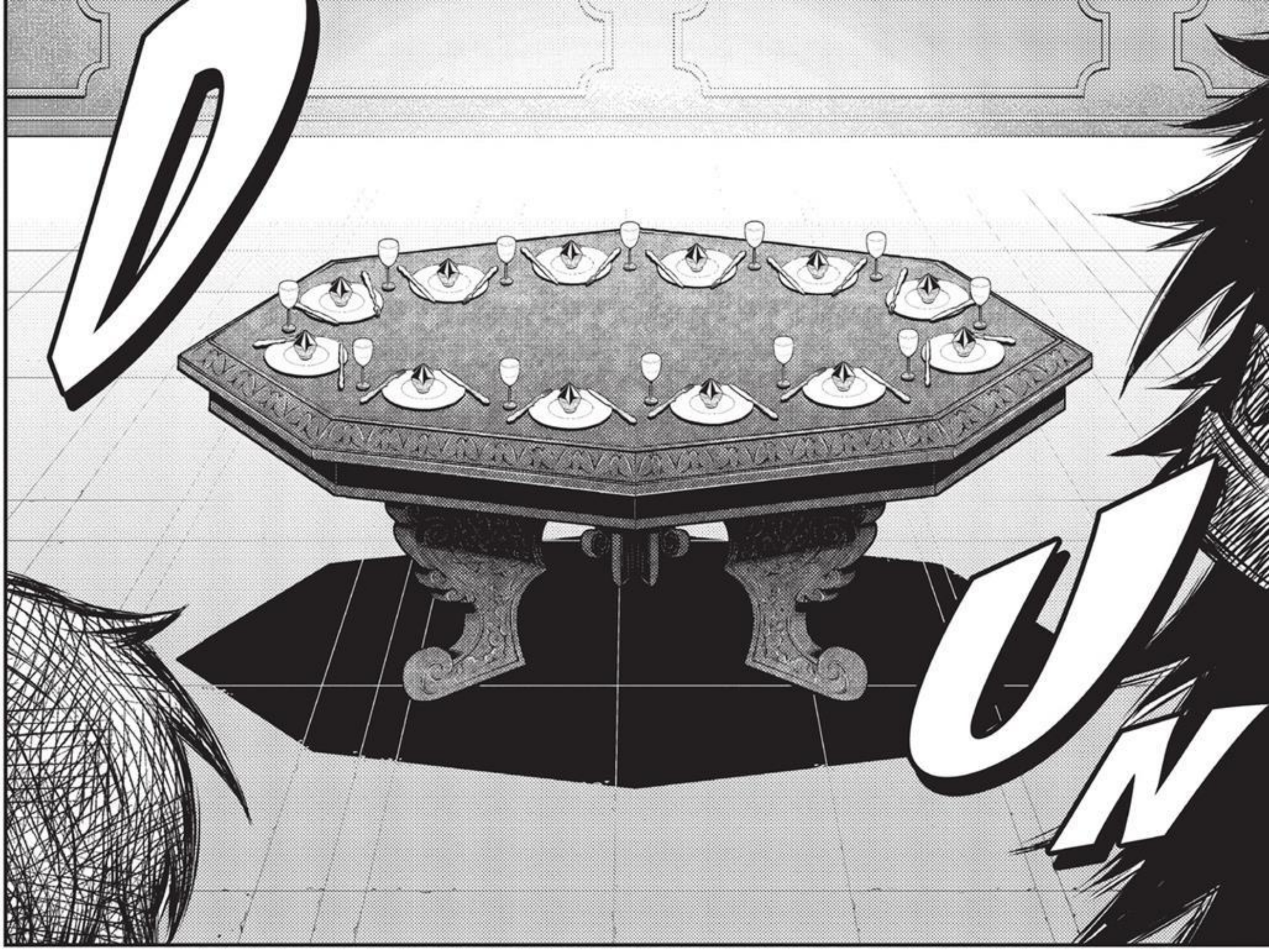
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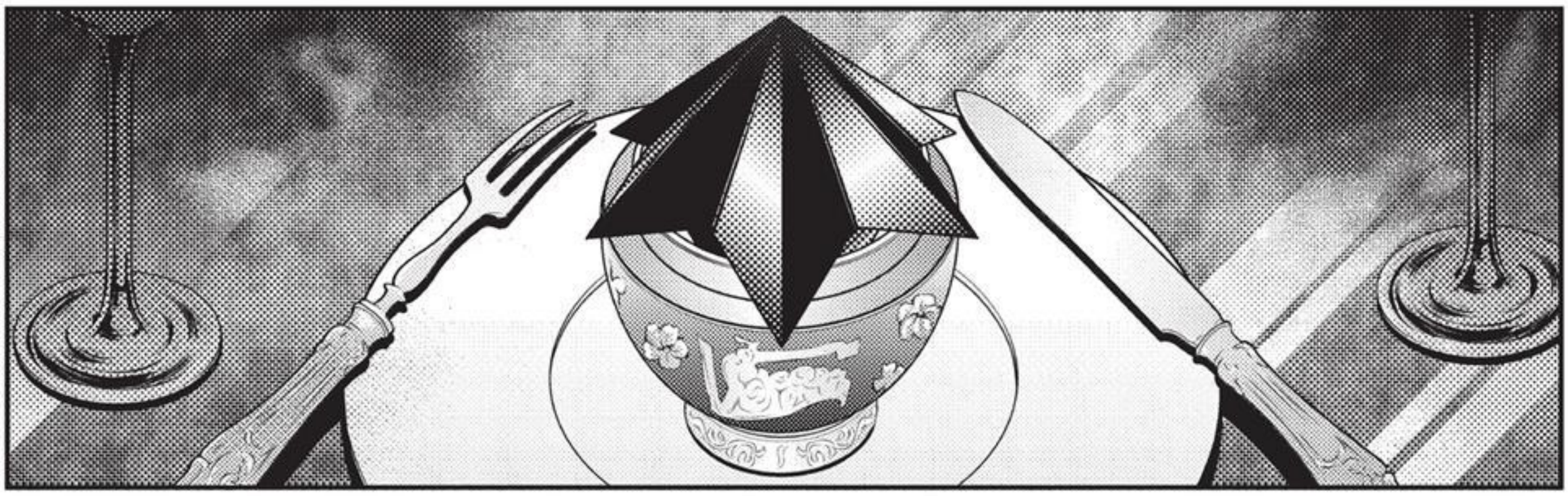
IF YOU PLEASE, DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE CENTER TABLE...

WITHOUT ANY FURTHER ADO, LET'S GO OVER THE RULES, SHALL WE?

...WHO DETERMINES FRIEND AND FOE ACCORDING TO WHOM HE CAN AND CANNOT KILL.

HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S THE TYPE ...


D
U
N




SH
VR
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO SWALLOW JEWELS THAT BIG?!
...AND SWALLOW THEM— WITHOUT BITING INTO THEM, MIND YOU.
EVERY-ONE, PLEASE TAKE ONE JEWEL APIECE...

SHF

SHF

SHF

SHF

SHF

AAH

SLRP

SKRRPRP

NGH...

HNGH...

GULP

GULP

AAAA

...THEY'RE EACH FOLLOWING THIS OLD MAN'S INSTRUC-TIONS TO THE LETTER.

WHAT SURPRISES ME IS THAT, WITH ALL THESE FIGHTERS AND ALL THEIR APPARENT PECULIARI-TIES...

...HOW MAJOR AN EVENT THIS **ZODIAC WAR** IS.

THAT JUST GOES TO SHOW...

ZZZZ

ZZZZ

HOW-EVER, THAT BOY...

...HE'LL LOSE VIA FORFEIT.

IF NOBODY WAKES HIM UP...

...YOU MEDDLE-SOME MONKEY.

STILL REFUSING TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, I SEE...

SINCE MY BROTHER'S JEWEL IS LEFT OVER...

HEY, MR. JUDGE GUY.

START

...
THERE'S NO PROBLEM WITH MY TAKING IT, IS THERE?

...THOSE CRIMINALS, THE TATSUMI BROTHERS?

COULD THEY BE...

THAT FACE... WERE THEY TWINS?

THEY'RE A KIND OF CRYSTALLIZED POISON.

NOW THEN, ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN WHAT THOSE JEWELS ARE.

HOW ABOUT THAT? SCORE! ♪

PLEASE, BY ALL MEANS. TAKE IT.

WHEN INGESTED BY A HUMAN, THEY UNDERGO A UNIQUE CHEMICAL REACTION WITH GASTRIC ACID...

...AND BECOME FATAL IN ROUGHLY TWELVE HOURS.

WE CALL THEM BEAST GEMS.

YAWN—

MY APOLOGIES, BUT ONCE SWALLOWED, THE JEWELS CANNOT BE REGURGI-TATED.

THEY'RE ALL SO CALM ABOUT THIS.

...

...AND WE'RE NOT ABOVE RECOGNIZ-ING WHEN WE'VE MADE A MISTAKE.

THE ELEVENTH ZODIAC WAR GOT A LITTLE OVERLY COMPLICATED ...

THE RULES HAVE BEEN SIMPLIFIED THIS TIME AROUND.

NOW THAT THAT'S OUT OF THE WAY, LET'S GO OVER THE BASIC RULES.

...AND WILL BE GRANTED A SINGLE WISH.

THE FIGHTER WHO COLLECTS ALL TWELVE JEWELS WILL BE THE VICTOR...

ANY WISH AT ALL.

THE VICTOR WILL BE PROVIDED THE ANTIDOTE. CONSIDER IT A BONUS PRIZE.

YOU NEED NOT BE CONCERNED.

IF WE'VE ALL TAKEN POISON, DOESN'T THAT MEAN THAT, WIN OR LOSE, WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE?

QUESTION.

DOES THAT MEAN THEY'LL DISSOLVE IN OUR STOM-ACHS?

YOU SAID THE JEWELS REACT TO STOMACH ACID...

URK

THAT'S NOT THE REAL ISSUE HERE ...

AS THE TIME LIMIT APPROACHES, THE JEWELS WILL BEGIN TO SHRINK, AND THEY'LL EVENTUALLY DISAPPEAR.

YES. THE EXACT RATE OF ABSORPTION WILL VARY SLIGHTLY FROM PERSON TO PERSON, BUT THE PROCESS IS ONE-WAY AND ABSOLUTE.

MIGHT I ADD ANOTHER QUESTION?

WOBBL

WOBBL

CERTAINLY. GO AHEAD.

...

HE'S PRACTICALLY A LEGEND. I HALF EXPECTED HIM TO BE DEAD BY NOW.

...

THE FIGHTER OF THE *SHEEP*.

GR

...WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

IF I UNINTEN-TIONALLY DESTROY A JEWEL ...

IN

TO BE PERFECTLY CANDID...

...I'VE COME PREPARED TO UTILIZE SOME *HIGH EXPLOSIVES*.

THAT'S JUST WHAT I DESPISE ABOUT HIM.

A CRAFTY PLOY FROM A VETERAN CONNIVER.

THEY COULD EASILY SHATTER SUCH JEWELS.

BUT I COULD ASK THE SAME ABOUT MY MACHINE GUNS.

NOTHING ELSE CAN HARM THEM— NO MATTER HOW DESTRUCTIVE THE PHYSICAL FORCE MAY BE.

HAVE NO FEAR. THE JEWELS WILL ONLY REACT WITH FRESH HUMAN STOMACH ACID.

...YOU MAY TEST IT FOR YOUR-SELF.

GIA

IF YOU WOULD LIKE...

RE

YOUR WORD IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

WOBBL

WOBBL

NO, NO. THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT.

...

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO COLLECT THEM NOW?

...INTO OUR BODIES.

WE'VE ALL PUT THESE DURABLE LITTLE GEMS...

I HAVE ONE LAST QUESTION.

...BUT IF I MAY OFFER A SUGGESTION ...

SWF

KK

KK

KK

I'LL LEAVE THE METHOD UP TO YOUR OWN ABILITIES AND JUDGMENTS...

...

RSTL

RSTL

WOW

NGH

SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
THUNK
ROLL
SPLIT
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
...TO BE THE SIMPLEST SOLUTION.
I WOULD THINK SLITTING OPEN THE STOMACH...
GL
ORP
SWF
...

YOU ARE ALL WORLD-CLASS FIGHTERS...

SW

...TENACIOUS AND RESILIENT. MAY YOU FIND THE VICTORY YOU SEEK.

EVERY-ONE, MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTEN-TION?

I HAVE A PROPOSAL!

CAN I COUNT ON ANYONE TO COOPERATE WITH ME?

...AS LONG AS WE ALL *COOPERATE.*

UNDER THE RULES OF THIS ZODIAC WAR, *NONE OF US NEED TO DIE...*

RSTL

RSTL

RSTL

IT'S JUST LIKE HER TO PITCH SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA AS IF IT WERE SOMETHING BRILLIANT.

SHE MUST WANT US TO THROW THE FIGHT AND AGREE ON A WINNER WHO WILL WISH TO BRING EVERYONE ELSE BACK TO LIFE.

ICH

THAT *MON-KEY...*

SW

F

...ON SOMETHING SO FRIVOLOUS AS REVIVING THE OTHERS.

AS IF ANYONE WOULD WASTE A PRECIOUS WISH...

THIS IS UTTERLY RIDICULOUS.

...THAN TO GET THROUGH THIS... WITHOUT ANYONE DYING.

I'D LIKE... NOTHING BETTER...

YAA

A

WN

I'M IN.

WHERE HAVE I HEARD IT BEFORE?

HIS VOICE ...

GLARE

NO, I MUST JUST BE IMAGIN-ING THINGS.

YOU WANT US TO MAKE YOU THE WINNER...

...AND THEN YOU'LL BRING US ALL BACK TO LIFE?

SWN

YAA

BUT LET ME GUESS YOUR PLAN...

CLEVER MONKEY. BUT STILL...

HMPH ...

MY METHOD COMES WITH BETTER ASSUR-ANCES.

THAT'S NOT QUITE WHAT MY PLAN IS. IF WE DO IT THAT WAY, SOME OF YOU MIGHT HARBOR DOUBTS THAT I'LL HOLD UP MY END.

SWF

SWF

SWF

I NEED TO STOP THIS. I CAN'T ALLOW SUCH A POWERFUL ALLIANCE TO FORM IN A BATTLE ROYALE...

UGH... THIS IS BAD.

ONE MORE AND THEY'LL HAVE THE MAJORITY ...

...

RT TL RT TL

THE FIGHTER OF THE OX— THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.

EVEN WORSE, AMONG THEM IS MY STRONGEST RIVAL HERE...

SH

BLORP

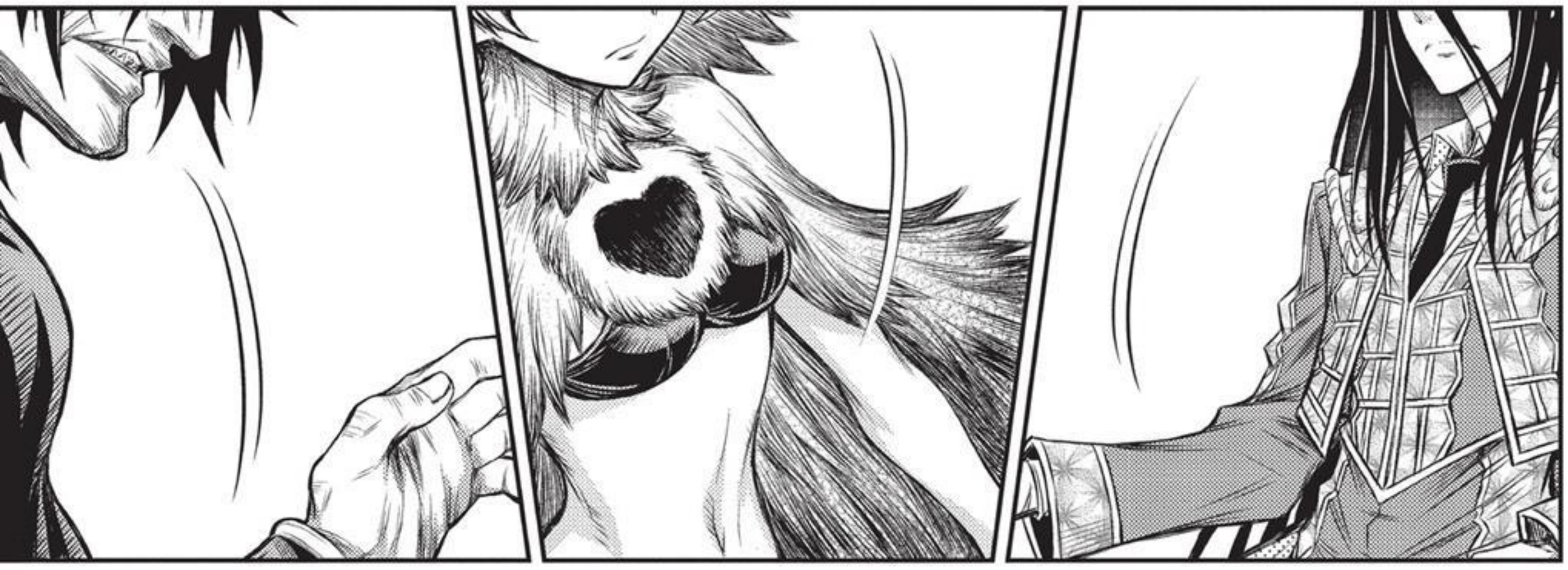
...WOULD NOT BE GRACEFUL.

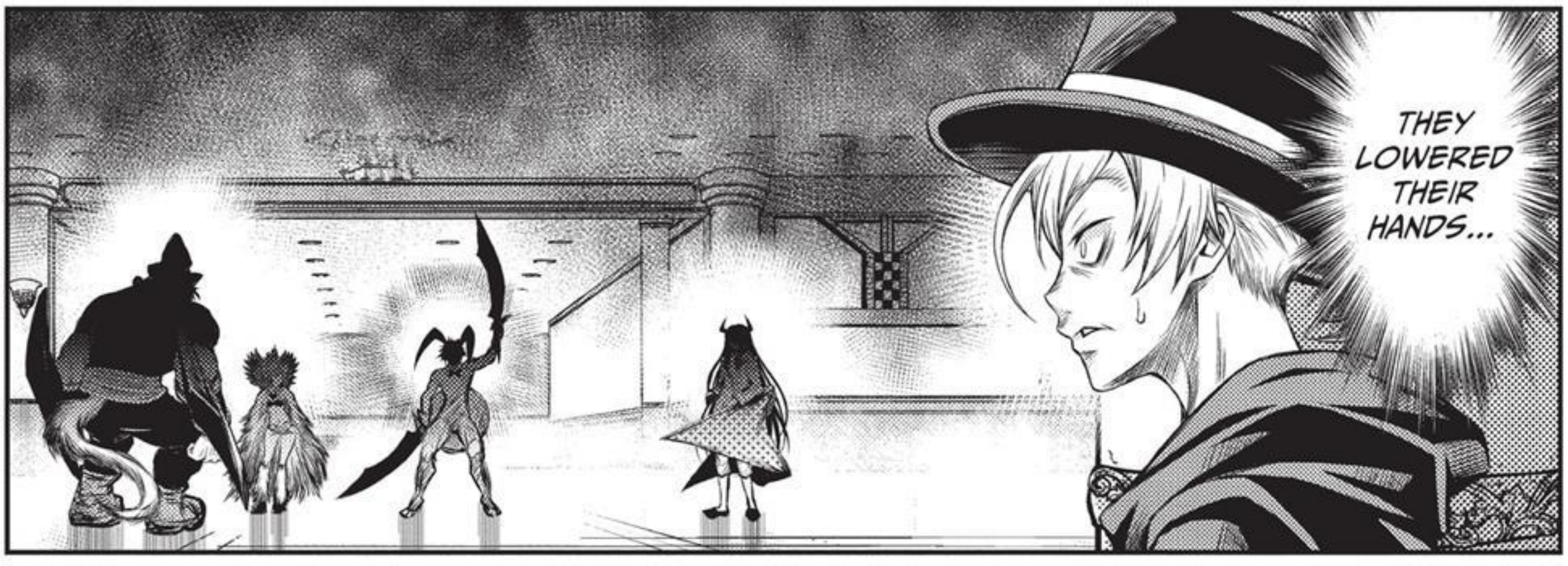
BUT PLUNGING THIS ROOM INTO CHAOS...

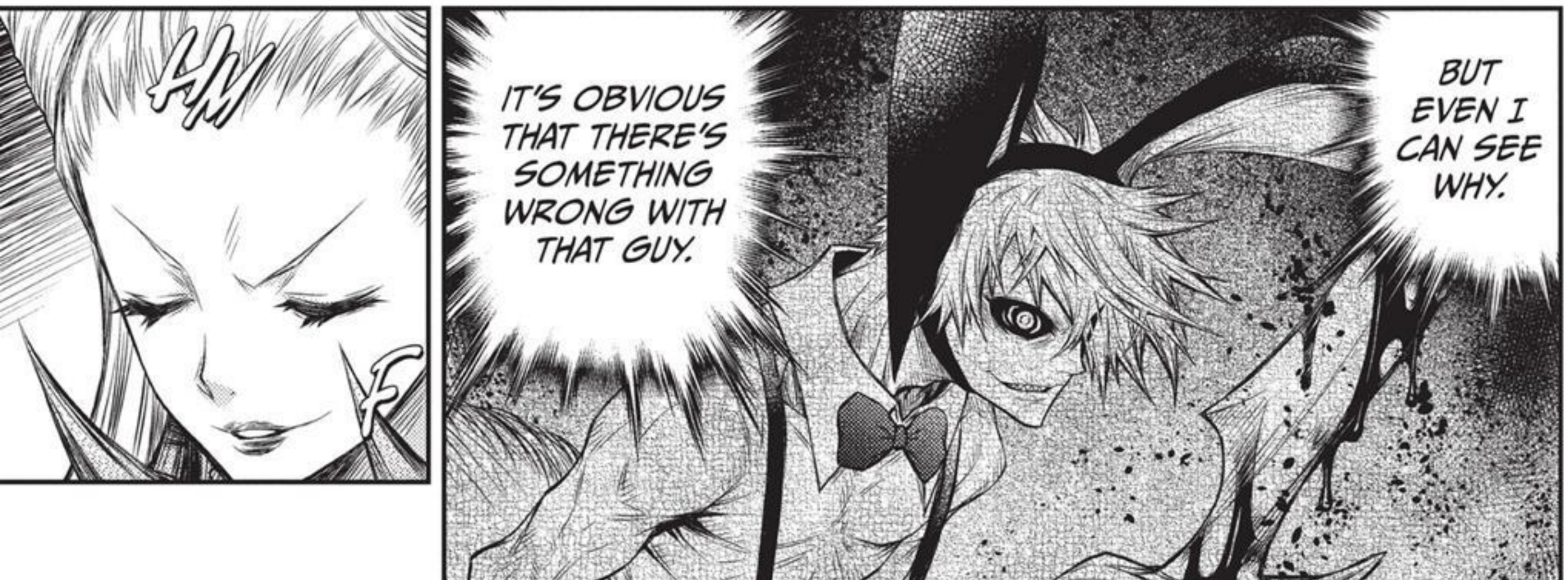
DO

OM






THEY LOWERED THEIR HANDS...


HM
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT GUY.
BUT EVEN I CAN SEE WHY.

EVERYONE ELSE—IF YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME TO SEEK ME OUT.

NOW, IF YOU BOTH WOULD COME HERE...

I'M JUST HAPPY THAT TWO OTHER PEACE SEEKERS ARE HERE!

ALL RIGHT, THANK YOU!

KLIK !!

DOOOOM



RMBL
RMBL
RMBL

...I'D BEST BE ON MY GUARD.

I DON'T KNOW WHO BLEW UP THE FLOOR, BUT...

EITHER THEY HAVE SOME SUPER-HUMAN POWER...

...OR...

TAP

TAP

TAP

TAP

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

...AND HER INCOMPRE-HENSIBLE BELIEF IN PEACE.

I'LL FINALLY RID MYSELF OF THAT WOMAN...

...DECIDED TO HIDE.

IT LOOKS LIKE EVERY-ONE'S...

SWF

SWF

KLAK

KLAK

!!

BUT YOU FALSELY ACCUSED ME, YOU SEE... AND WITHOUT A SHRED OF PROOF.

AND YET YOU ACCUSED ME ANYWAY? IT MAKES ME WONDER...

I COULD HAVE STARTED WITH ANYONE, YOU KNOW? WOULDN'T MATTER TO ME.

WHERE'S YOUR HUMANITY?

GLARE

I REALLY DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE THIS WAY.

...

PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS.

I HAD HOPED TO LET MY STRONGER ADVERSARIES BATTLE IT OUT AMONG THEMSELVES FIRST...

HE CARRIES SUCH A **PECULIAR** AURA IT'S HARD TO GET A GOOD READ ON HIM—BUT I CAN TELL HE **CAN** FIGHT.

OR BETTER STILL, **MONKEY.**

LIKE AGAINST **OX.**

...BUT NOW YOU'VE CHOSEN YOUR DEATH.

I TRULY WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT YOU SO SOON...

YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE...

GN

...BEGINS!

THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE ZODIAC WAR...

I AM *INŌNO-SHISHI*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *BOAR*.

KA SH

I KILL IN *ABUN-DANCE!*

K K

I AM *USAGI*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *RABBIT.*

I KILL WITH *DISTINC-TION.*

Luxury was to be made,
not asked for—
such was her philosophy.
This was the time to rise to action—
to graceful action.

TWELVE FIERCE WARRIORS TAKE ON THE NAMES OF THE ZODIAC...

THE ZODIAC WAR IS HELD ONCE EVERY TWELVE YEARS.

THE SOLE VICTOR GETS THE PRIZE OF BEING GRANTED ANY SINGLE WISH.

...AND STAKE THEIR LIVES AND SOULS IN A FORMAL BATTLE TO THE DEATH.

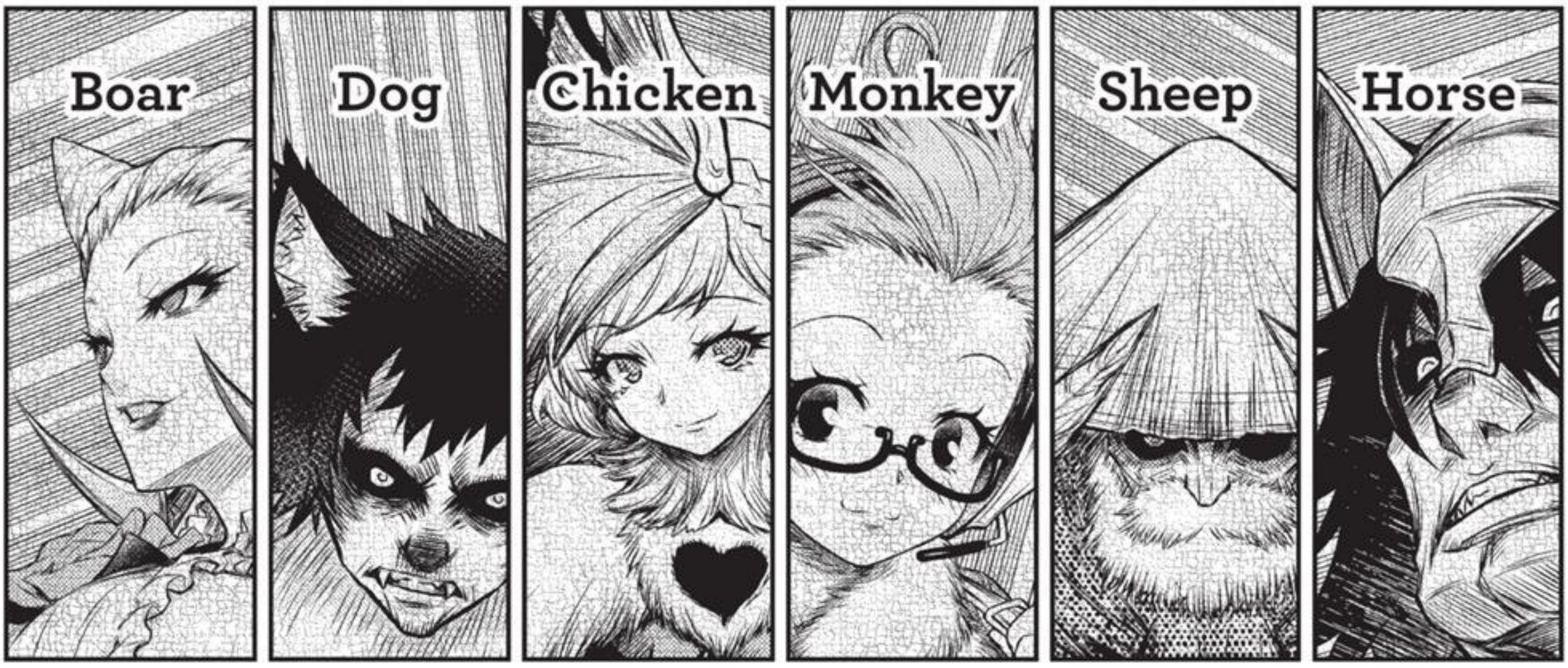
CHAPTER TWO

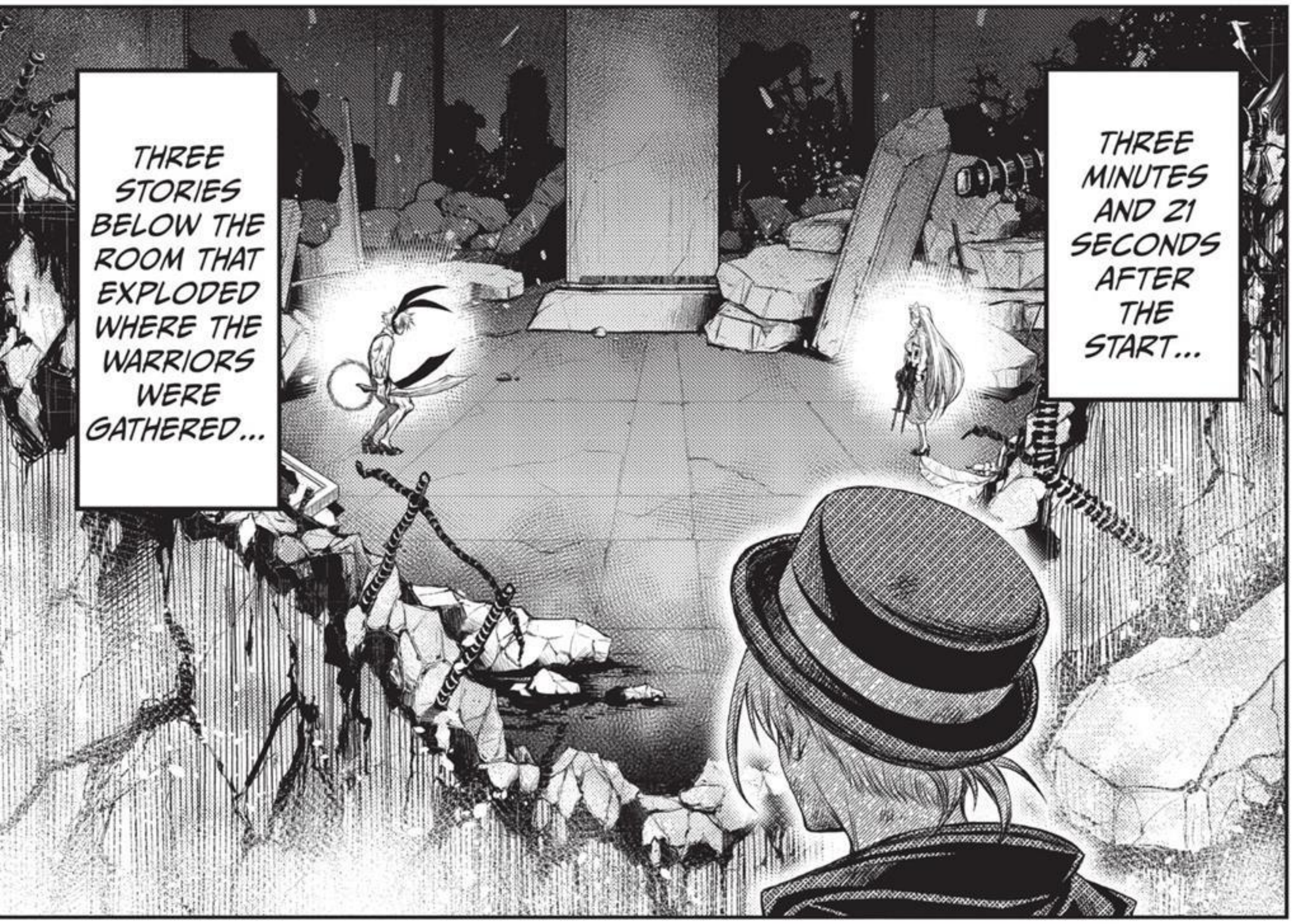
RABBIT, SNAKE, CHICKEN, DOG, BOAR

EACH COMPETITOR WAS GIVEN ONE OF TWELVE JEWELS TO SWALLOW...

...AND VICTORY GOES TO THE FIGHTER WHO CLAIMS THEM ALL.




Boar
Dog
Chicken
Monkey
Sheep
Horse


THREE STORIES BELOW THE ROOM THAT EXPLODED WHERE THE WARRIORS WERE GATHERED...
THREE MINUTES AND 21 SECONDS AFTER THE START...


BOAR VS. RABBIT.
...THE FIRST BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN...

I KILL WITH *DISTINC-TION.*

I AM *USAGI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *RABBIT.*

I KILL IN *ABUN-DANCE!*

I AM *INŌNOSHISHI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *BOAR.*

KKK

I SEE YOU KNOW ENOUGH MANNERS TO PROPERLY INTRODUCE YOUR-SELF!

WF

TP TP TP TP TP TP TP

DRM

DRM

DRM

DRM

BUT MY MACHINE GUN'S BULLETS WILL ALWAYS BE FASTER.

HE'S QUITE FAST, THAT'S FOR SURE...

THAT WON'T WORK!!

WILL YOU WAIT FOR ME TO RELOAD?

FSH H H

IT'S FUTILE!

WILL YOU THROW YOUR SWORDS AT ME?

I NEVER HAVE TO STOP AND RELOAD. I CAN KEEP ON SHOOTING AS LONG AS I LIKE, WHEREVER I LIKE.

NOT WHEN I HAVE A POWER AS GRACEFUL AND ELEGANT AS MINE— **MAKING IT RAIN.**

...I CAN TAKE MY TIME SIFTING THROUGH WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU TO FIND YOUR JEWEL.

ONCE MY BULLETS REDUCE YOU TO A BLOODY PULP...

IT'S TIME TO FILL YOU WITH HOLES.

NOW...


ガチ
WI
IS P


DRM
DRM
DRM
WH-
WHO
IS IT
?!
RATATA
TATATA
TATATA

KNK

THU

...HOW COULD I NOT SENSE THEM?

AND ...

WHAT? HOW COULD SOMEONE GRAB ME FROM BEHIND?

G

...MANAGE TO FORGE AN ALLIANCE IN THOSE BRIEF MOMENTS AFTER THE FLOOR EX-PLODED...?

HOW DID THIS LUNATIC, OF ALL PEOPLE ...

AK

WHO...

WHO *ARE* YOU?

WHO WOULD EVER GO ALONG WITH A PLAN LIKE THAT?

SST

SST

AND HE EVEN STABBED HIS ALLY TOO...

SST

!!

H-HOW IS THIS POS-SIBLE?

THAT'S **SNAKE'S** BODY— BUT HE'S DEAD.

FT

SH

PLO

RT

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HE...

HE DOESN'T HAVE A HEAD?!

GWOOO

WOBBL

WOBBL

WOBBL

FWI

T

FWIF

FWIF

FWIF

SWF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

Y-
YOU...

YOU'RE A *NECRO-MANCER* ?!

GR

IN

IT WASN'T ANYONE... IT WAS A CORPSE.

HUFF

NO WONDER I DIDN'T SENSE ANYONE BEHIND ME...

I CAN MAKE FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE I'VE KILLED.

NO, I'M A *NECRO-MANTICIST.*

NO

HE HAS THE POWER TO CONTROL THE DEAD.

...

NOT ONLY WAS SHE THE SUCCESSOR OF THE PREVIOUS WINNER, SHE WAS FAVORED TO WIN THIS ZODIAC WAR TOO!

HE EASILY MANAGED TO KILL BOAR.

IT WAS JUST A PRECAUTION— I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE AWARE OF MY POWER.

HEY, I'M SORRY I LIED ABOUT NOT KILLING THE FIGHTER OF THE **SNAKE.**

AND NOT HIS MIND.

NOT HIS POWER ...

RABBIT... NOTHING ABOUT HIM IS NORMAL.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS MY END.

WEEZ

I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

WEEZ

...

HEY, TOSHIKO.

TOSHIKO.

I DON'T UNDER-STAND, TOSHIKO.

WHY WOULD HE PASS OVER YOU, THE **ELDER SISTER**...

...AND CHOOSE **ME** TO REPRESENT THE BOAR IN THE ZODIAC WAR?

...

JUST WHAT COULD FATHER BE THINKING?

THAT'S WHY...

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT I MUST ENTER THE ZODIAC WAR AND THAT I MUST WIN.

ME.

WHO BELONGS AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD, STANDING ABOVE ALL OTHERS?

...AND CLAIMED THE INVITATION FOR MYSELF.

...I KILLED MY YOUNGER SISTER...

PLEASE FORGIVE ME, ALL RIGHT?

NOW ...

...TO END SO DISGRACE-FULLY...

KA

BUT NOW ...

THUD

...YOU'LL BE MY FRIEND TOO.

BECAUSE FROM NOW ON...

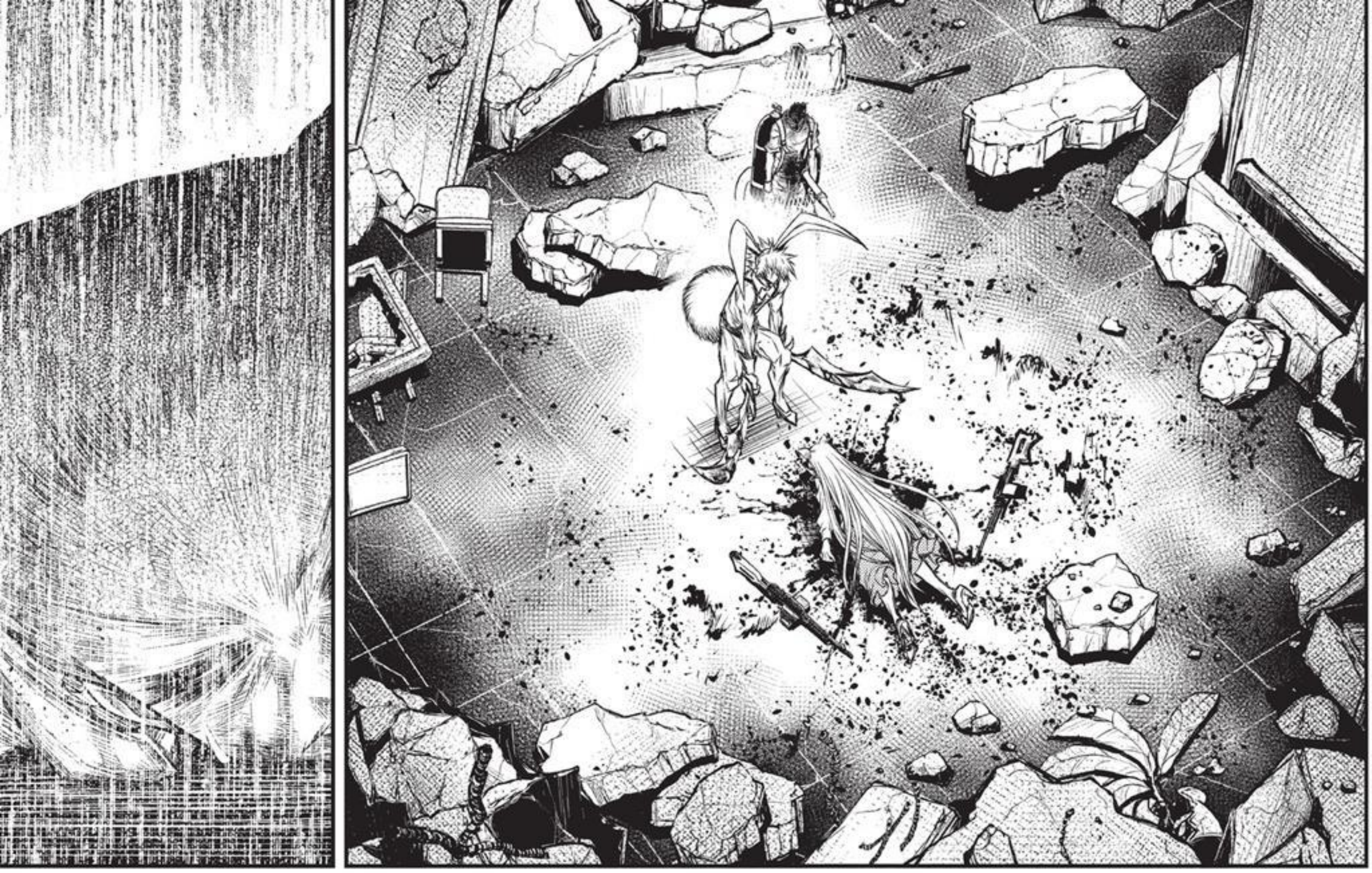
ZZZ

AH...

AKH...

AGH...

AAAA

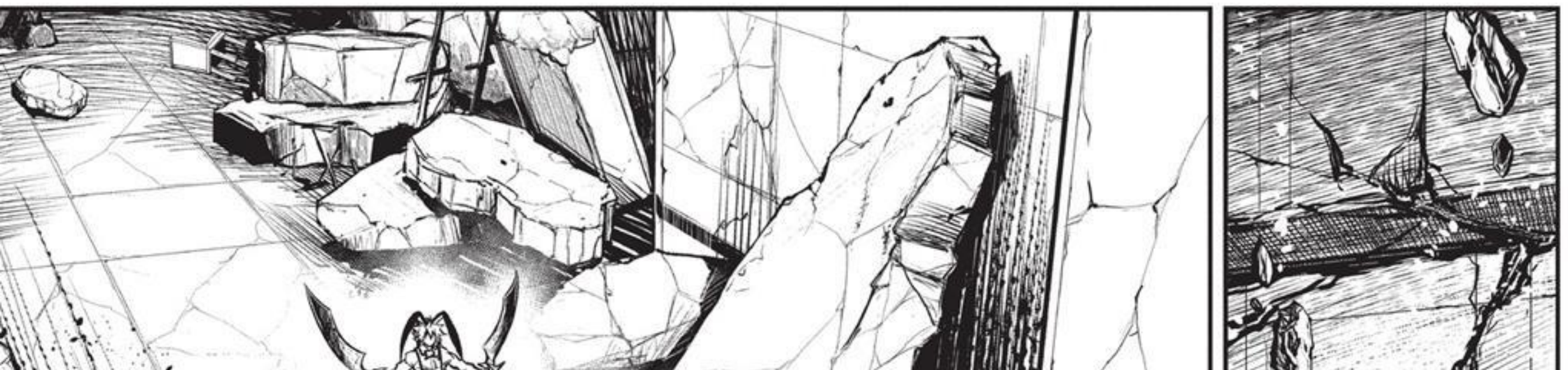



UrK


SEVEN MINUTES AND ELEVEN SECONDS AFTER THE START: RABBIT DEFEATS BOAR.

RABBIT'S CORPSE ALLIANCE IS FORMED.








TMP
TMP
TMP


FWIF

TMP

TMP

TMP

TMP

HUFF

...HAVE SOME KIND OF *SUPER-POWER?*

...IN THIS TWELFTH ZODIAC WAR...

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ALL OF THE FIGHTERS...

HUFF

HUFF

AND THEN THERE'S *THIS ONE.*

NECRO-MANTICIST.

SWP

THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT.

MAKING IT RAIN.

SWP

THE FIGHTER OF THE BOAR.

SWP

SWP

DOTSUKU, THE FIGHTER OF THE DOG.

DOTSUKU!!

HE'S 177 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 52 KILOGRAMS.

REAL NAME, MICHIO TSUKUI. BORN ON MAY 5.

...AND IS POPULAR WITH PARENTS AND KIDS ALIKE.

...BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HE TAKES HIS JOB SERIOUSLY ...

HE WORKS AS A DAY CARE TEACHER, AND...

TUG

TUG

MR. DOTSU-KU!

TEACHER!

TEACHER!

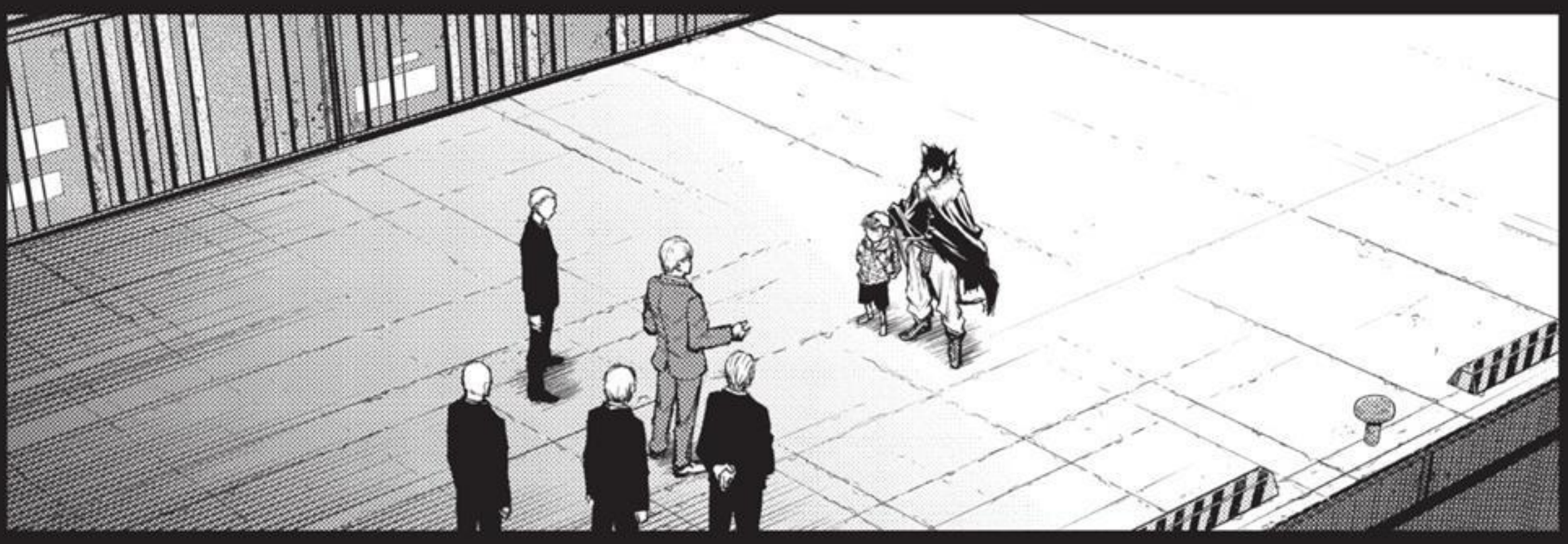
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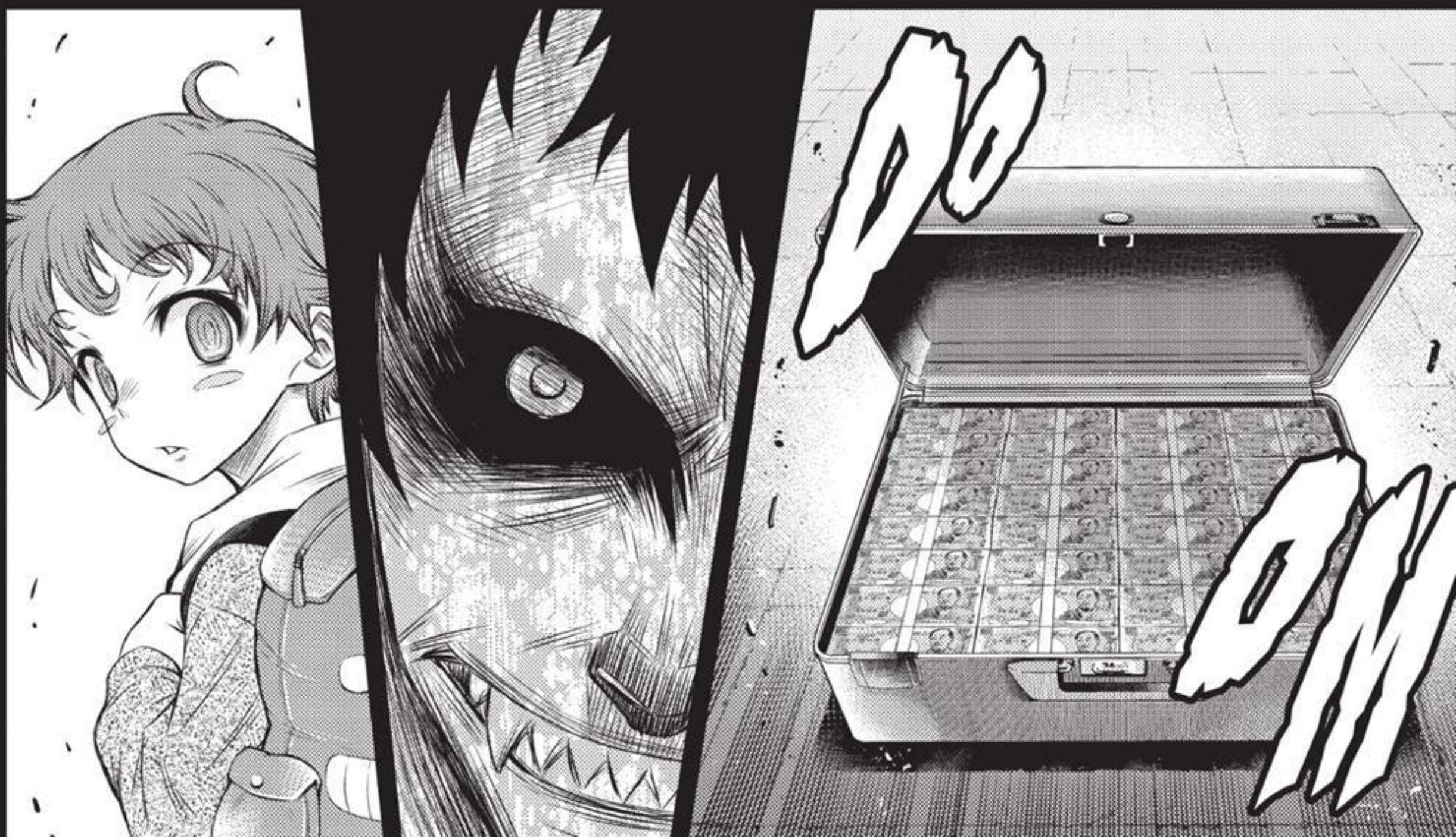
OH

SMI

RK


DU
N




ON

...AND DELIVERING THEM TO THE ORGANIZA-TIONS THAT WANT THEM.

IN SECRET, HIS REAL PROFESSION IS FINDING CHILDREN WHO POSSESS CERTAIN GIFTS...





HIS DEALINGS HAVE EARNED HIM MANY ENEMIES, BUT...



...HAVE BEEN CALLED THE MAD DOG'S VISE, WHICH IS GREATLY FEARED.

KRN

CH

HIS VICIOUS TEETH, CAPABLE OF PULVERIZING ANYTHING...

THAT MUST BE...

...THE FIGHTER OF THE DOG'S SPECIAL POWER.

THE MAD DOG'S VISE...

SW

...

BIRDS ?

FWUF

FWUF

FWUF

out

BUT THE EFFECTS OF THE POISON WILL LIKELY START BEFORE THEN. WITHIN TEN HOURS FROM NOW, IT'LL AFFECT OUR FIGHTING.

IN TWELVE HOURS, THE JEWELS WILL FULLY DISSOLVE.

KL NK

IN A BATTLE ROYALE, IT'S BEST NOT TO MAKE ANY BIG MOVES EARLY ON.

KL NK

...AND WAIT FOR AN OPENING.

KI

WITH THIS TIME LIMIT, WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO STRAY FAR FROM WHERE WE ARE. WE'LL ALL KEEP A CERTAIN DISTANCE FROM EACH OTHER...

NK

EXCEPT THIS TIME.

KL NK

...BUT I JUST THINK THIS IS A GOOD PLACE TO HIDE.

B2F PARKING

SOME SAY IT'S DARKEST UNDER THE LIGHT-HOUSE...

KL NK

THIS TIME, EVERYONE SWALLOWED THOSE POISON JEWELS.

KL NK

B2F PARKING

DEEP DOWN, EVERY DOG WANTS TO WAIT.

WELL, I'LL WAIT. THAT'S MY PREROG-ATIVE.

THAT'S RIGHT.

WHEN YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO DO THE OPPOSITE.

DO

OH

OX.

MY BIGGEST PROBLEM IS THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER...

SH

F

ONE WAY

TMD

TMD

HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A *KILLER*...

...AND HE DOESN'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO SURVIVE A ZODIAC WAR.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT **RABBIT**...

...JUDGING BY HOW HE KILLED **SNAKE** BEFORE THE BATTLE HAD EVEN BEGUN.

ONLY ONE OTHER FIGHTER CONCERNS ME...

G

R

R

R

R

R

...

FOOOOUND YOU!

A FIGHTER WHO COULD CATCH US ALL OFF GUARD LIKE THAT MUST BE—

...AND THAT'S WHOEVER CAUSED THE FLOOR TO EXPLODE.



WU

RL

ALL RIGHT. AS A FIGHTER I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO HANDLE THIS.

URK

PRIK

TSK... I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE WOULD FIND ME HERE.

I MEAN YOU NO HARM.

AH! OH, PLEASE DON'T MISUNDER-STAND.

!!

I...

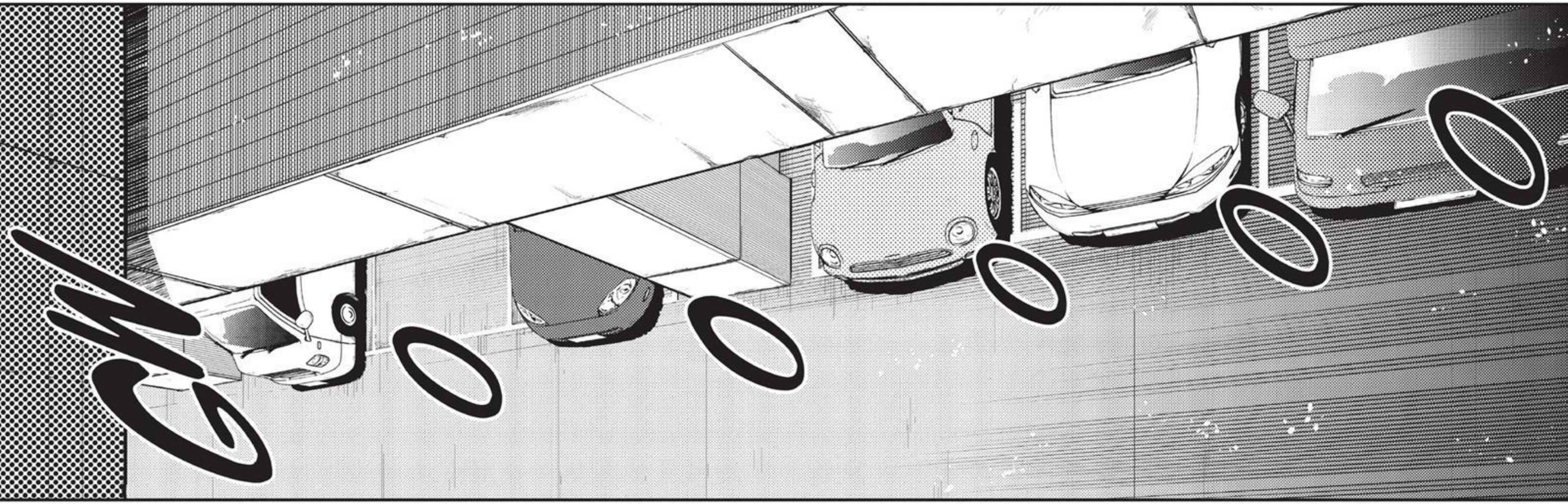
I WANTED TO SEE IF WE COULD TEAM UP.

I... I ONLY CAME TO YOU BECAUSE...

...BE-CAUSE... WELL...

TEAM UP?

...






THERE HE IS.


DOTSUKU, THE FIGHTER OF THE DOG.
AND HE'S NOT ALONE ...

NIWATORI, THE FIGHTER OF THE CHICKEN.

SHE'S 153 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 42 KILOGRAMS.

REAL NAME, RYŌKA NIWA. BORN ON JUNE 6.

BUT WILL HE BE SO EASILY CONVINCED ?

IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S TRYING TO TEAM UP WITH **DOG**.

...TO **MONKEY'S** OFFER.

I GUESS SHE DID RESPOND ...

...

...AND I THINK STARTING IN TEAMS IS OBVIOUSLY THE BEST IDEA.

THIS IS A BATTLE ROYALE ...

MAYBE SHE REALLY IS A **PACIFIST** AFTER ALL...

THEN WE'LL HAVE A FAIR FIGHT, ONE-ON-ONE. IT'S AS EASY AS THAT.

WE CAN JOIN FORCES UNTIL WE'RE THE LAST TWO LEFT.

WON'T YOU JOIN ME?!

SO PLEASE!

...THEN WHY WAS MONKEY THE ONLY ONE TO INITIATE THE MOVE?

IF STARTING IN TEAMS IS SO OBVIOUS...

...

HASN'T SHE STOPPED TO WONDER WHY?

TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE DANGER!

PLEASE. WE HAVE TO HURRY. WE'RE IN DANGER.

And what's with that costume?

DOESN'T SHE SEE THE RISK OF BETRAYAL? IS SHE THAT STUPID?

...A NECRO-MANTICIST !!

IT'S RABBIT. HE'S...

DEAD

HOW DOES SHE KNOW THAT?

HOW...

!!

...WHEN RABBIT AND BOAR FOUGHT ?

WAS SHE SOME-WHERE WATCHING ...

AND HE'S KILLED BOAR! HE ALREADY HAS TWO ALLIES!!

IT DOES!

A NECRO-MANTICIST?

THAT'S CRAZY. SURELY A *POWER* LIKE THAT DOESN'T REALLY EXIST.

THE MORE HE KILLS, THE MORE FIGHTERS HE HAS UNDER HIS COMMAND.

A NECRO-MANTICIST ...

BUT MORE THAN THAT...

A CREATOR AND A HORROR.

HE'S A KILLER AND A CREATOR.

...GIVES HIM AN ADVANTAGE LIKE NONE OTHER.

HE CAN FORM AN ALLIANCE THAT WILL NEVER BETRAY HIM—AND THERE'S NO NEGOTIATION REQUIRED.

THE POWER TO CONTROL THE FIGHTERS HE KILLS...

HM?

IN THAT CASE...

SW

F

AH, I CAN EXPLAIN THAT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL OF THIS?

WAIT ...

!!

SHA

I CAN COMMUNE WITH ALL KINDS OF BIRDS!

MY POWER IS CALLED THE *EYE OF THE* COR-MORANT.

FLY

SO...

THAT'S HOW YOU FOUND ME DOWN HERE.

...

SHE'S ...

...SHE'S ALREADY REVEALED HER POWER. IT DOESN'T GET DUMBER THAN THAT.

SHE'S ONLY JUST MET ME, AND YET...

...BUT SHE HAS NO IDEA WHY I CHOSE TO HIDE IN THIS PLACE.

SHE MAY HAVE FOUND ME HERE...

...THAT MY SPECIAL POWER IS MY BITE.

I'VE LED EVERY-ONE TO BELIEVE ...

♪

SHE REALLY IS STUPID !!

...MASTERY OVER POISON.

BUT MY REAL POWER IS...

...TO MORE DEATH.

...RANGING FROM DEATH...

... PRODUCE EFFECTS ...

MY BODY CAN NATURALLY PRODUCE A VARIETY OF TOXINS THAT, WHEN INTRODUCED TO MY ENEMIES...

WHEN I SAW THOSE JEWELS, I KNEW IMMEDIATELY THEY WERE POISON.

BY THE TIME I PUT MINE INTO MY MOUTH...

...MY BODY HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO WORK ON PRODUCING THE ANTIDOTE.

IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE CHEATING, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO FEEL GUILTY OVER IT.

MY PLAN WAS TO STAY IN HIDING HERE...

...UNTIL ONLY THREE FIGHTERS, OR MAYBE FEWER, REMAINED.

CHICKEN.

CAN YOU SEE WHERE RABBIT IS RIGHT NOW?

O-OF COURSE.

I'M KEEPING MY WATCHERS A FAIR DISTANCE AWAY SO THAT RABBIT WON'T REALIZE HE'S BEING WATCHED...

...BUT NOT SO FAR THAT THEY COULD LOSE THEIR TARGETS.

ALL RIGHT.

...

...BUT I'LL MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR YOU. I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER.

LISTEN, I HATE WORKING WITH OTHERS...

I HAVE TO PUT DOWN RABBIT AND HIS MINIONS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

I'VE LOST MY ADVANTAGE. I NEED TO CHANGE MY STRATEGY.

AND I'LL KILL HER WHEN SHE'S OF NO USE ANYMORE.

WE'LL KILL HIM.

WE'RE GOING RABBIT HUNTING.

AS FOR CHICKEN... I'LL USE HER FOR ALL SHE'S WORTH.

I AM *NIWATORI*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *CHICKEN*.

I KILL BY *PECKS*.

I AM *DOTSU-KU*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *DOG*.

I KILL IN *BITES*.

...JUST HOW CAN I USE HER?

NOW THE QUESTION IS...

...BUT WILL IT BE ENOUGH TO STOP RABBIT?

DOG AND CHICKEN HAVE FORMED AN ALLIANCE...

Each fighter held some
advantage over one or another
in the constraints of the battle.
Victory would rely upon how
they used their advantages.

ALL RIGHT, DOTSUKU!

WE CAN DO THIS! WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE END!

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER NOW.

CHAPTER THREE

CHICKEN, DOG, BOAR

WE'RE ONLY IN THIS TOGETHER UNTIL WE FIGHT RABBIT.

I'LL USE HER FOR ALL SHE'S WORTH...

AND I'LL KILL HER WHEN SHE'S OF NO USE ANYMORE.

WE SHOULD START BY EXCHANGING WHAT WE KNOW.

THAT WE ARE.

GRA

SSP

CHAPTER THREE
CHICKEN, DOG, BOAR

HOW IT STARTS OUT WITH THE LYRICS, "THE MOUNTAIN WHERE I CHASED RABBITS, THE RIVER WHERE I FISHED SMALL CARP"...

YOU KNOW THAT SONG "FURUSATO," RIGHT?

WOOOOOO

...

...SOONER OR LATER THEY PROBABLY DID EAT THOSE RABBITS TOO. AND I BET THE RABBITS *WERE* TASTY.

WELL, IF THE PERSON IN THE SONG WAS CATCHING CARP, IF YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT IT...

...AND PEOPLE OFTEN MISHEAR IT AS, "THE MOUNTAIN WHERE THERE'S TASTY RABBITS"?

HU

FF

GRIN

GRIN

GL

A

RE

SINCE I'M GOING TO KILL HER ANYWAY ...

...IT WON'T HURT IF I TELL HER SOME REAL INFORMATION.

OX, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY AND BOAR.

I KNOW FIVE OF THE FIGHTERS...

NO ONE HAS EVER STOOD ON A BATTLEFIELD AGAINST HIM AND SURVIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT.

PEOPLE CALL HIM THE *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.*

HOW CAN I PUT IT? HE'S *INCOMPREHENSIBLY STRONG.*

THE MOST DANGEROUS IS *OX.*

...IF YOU STUMBLE ACROSS HIM, I SUGGEST YOU RUN.

THAT'S RIGHT. AGAINST A FIGHTER LIKE YOU, WELL...

THE *NATURAL-BORN... SLAYER?*

AS FOR THE TATSUMI BROTHERS— THAT'S *DRAGON* AND *SNAKE*.

THE TWINS MADE FOR A HELL OF A TEAM TOGETHER...

...BUT ONE IS ALREADY DEAD, AND THE OTHER'S NOT HALF AS TOUGH ON HIS OWN.

NOW, *MONKEY*... YOU SAW HOW SHE IS. SHE'S A PACIFIST— A REAL BLEEDING HEART.

HER PEACE TREATIES HAVE BROUGHT MANY A WAR TO A CEASE-FIRE.

TO MERCS LIKE US, SHE'S BAD FOR BUSINESS.

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF SHE'S PARTICIPATING IN THE ZODIAC WAR...

...BECAUSE SHE THINKS SHE CAN END IT.

DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT'S POSSIBLE?

...

OF COURSE NOT.

BUT...

IF IT'S HER, JUST MAYBE... IT MIGHT BE.

SO, NIWATORI, WHO DO YOU KNOW?

OH, I, UH, DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ANYONE. JUST RUMORS I WOULDN'T TRUST...

I'M SORRY.

SHE COULD DO THIS THING WITH HER GUNS CALLED *MAKING IT RAIN* THAT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF.

YOU COULD EVEN SAY IT'S LUCKY FOR US SHE DIED SO EARLY.

I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT *BOAR.*

WHO DO YOU MEAN, THAT BOY?

DON'T YOU WONDER ABOUT THAT BOY?

OH! BUT, DOTSUKU ...

HE CAN'T BE TOO MUCH OLDER THAN 15, RIGHT?

HE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE THE FIGHTING TYPE...

THE SLEEPY ONE. YOU KNOW, THE ONE WHO KEPT DOZING OFF?

NO, IT'S NOT THAT I THINK HE'S TOUGH OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. IT'S JUST...

DO YOU THINK WE NEED TO BE WARY OF HIM?

YOU DON'T SEEM MUCH LIKE THE FIGHTING TYPE YOURSELF.

I DO.

NOW THAT SHE MENTIONS IT...

!!

...I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE. DON'T YOU?

WERE WE ALLIES OR ENEMIES?

HAVE WE SHARED A BATTLE-FIELD?

WHAT?!

...

FWAP

!!

RABBIT'S TEAM HAS SPLIT IN TWO!!

THE BAR
飲み放題
¥3280

OH, DOTSUKU, THIS IS BAD!

Y- YES.

AND SHE'S JUST DOWN THAT STREET.

YOU SAID THAT *BOAR* SPLIT OFF FROM THE OTHERS? SHE'S ALONE?

!!

THERE SHE IS!

IT'S BOAR'S CORPSE !!

DRM DRM DRM DRM DRM

Ester




!!
W
RL
MP

RATATA

TATA

TATA

TATA

RMBL

RMBL

ATA

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE OUR *NECRO-MANTICIST* IS THE *REAL DEAL.*

NOT THAT I DOUBTED YOU, NIWATORI.

HUH. SO SHE REALLY IS THE *WALKING DEAD.*

HE'S NOT EVEN TRYING TO HIDE THE FACT THAT SHE'S UNDEAD...

BUT WHY WOULD HE SEND BOAR OFF ON HER OWN LIKE THIS?

GW

GW

NIWATORI. GIVE ME YOUR ARM.

IN THAT CASE, IT MIGHT BE TIME TO PUT HER TO USE.

...A TRAP?

GR

IS THIS...

...


KR
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP

IT DOESN'T HURT...

WAIT... WHAT'S GOING ON?

W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME?!

EEEEEEEEK!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

I INJECTED YOU WITH AN ANESTHETIC ALONG WITH THE REST OF IT.

JUST A LITTLE *PERFOR-MANCE ENHANCE-MENT.*

...

DOO

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO ME.

H-HOW DO I FEEL?

IT'S MY ACE IN THE HOLE.

IT'S A KIND OF DOPING DRUG—NOT ALL POISONS ARE DEADLY. IT DRAWS OUT ITS USER'S LATENT POTENTIAL TO THE ABSOLUTE LIMIT.

BOOST UP

I CALL IT THE *ONE MAN ARMY.*

STAY CALM. ALL I DID WAS UNLOCK POWER YOU ALREADY POSSESSED.

CONTROL IT.

STEADY YOUR-SELF.

WHAT...

OOOOH!!

WHAT IS THIS?!

...I'LL SEND HER OUT TO FIGHT **BOAR** ALONE.

I DON'T CARE WHO WINS...

NOW THAT SHE'S BEEN POWERED UP...

GLANCE

THEN I'LL BE THE ONE AMBUSHING **THEM.** MY POISON FANGS WILL MAKE SHORT WORK OF THEM.

I JUST NEED THE BATTLE TO LAST LONG ENOUGH TO DRAW OUT RABBIT AND SNAKE.

FOR I AM THE MAD DOG, THE HUNTER— THE FIGHTER OF THE **DOG...**

SH

F

AND THEN I'LL GO BACK INTO HIDING UNDER-GROUND.

...DOPING OR NOT, SHE WILL SURELY BE KILLED BY ONE OF OUR THREE OPPONENTS.

AS FOR CHICKEN...

...

DOTSUKU

!!!

WOBBL

WOBBL

SPLAT

THUD

I FINALLY GOT THAT BOOST.

BUT IT'S DONE NOW.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT TOOK SO LONG.

UGH...

...ACTUALLY, I KNEW ABOUT YOU.

ABOUT YOUR POISONS AND EVERYTHING.

DOTSUKU, I KNOW I *TOLD* YOU I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE OTHERS, BUT...

...AND DEFEATED HIM.

CHICKEN BETRAYED DOG...

THERE IT IS!

!!

SHE'LL DO **ANYTHING** IN THE NAME OF SELF-PRESER-VATION.

SHE MAY NOT BE **STRONG**, BUT SHE'S **DETER-MINED.**

SHLK

SQLCH

SQWSH

SQWSH

SLIM

F

?!

SHAKA

SHAKA

...AND WITH THAT...

...CHICKEN HAS TWO JEWELS IN HER POSSES-SION.

FWP

BOW

...I'LL ERECT A STATUE IN YOUR HONOR. I PROMISE YOU.

AND IF I DO...

...

HMM...?

BUT WAIT ...!

WHAT DID YOUR FACE LOOK LIKE AGAIN?

BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE...

...THERE'S NOW A CHANCE I CAN WIN THIS!

THANK YOU, DOTSUKU.

...

OKAY THEN.

MEN AREN'T ABOUT THEIR FACES ANYWAY.

OH WELL! AS LONG AS THE STATUE HAS FANGS, IT'LL BE GOOD ENOUGH!

SMIRK

WOBBL

WOBBL

SQUISH

HERE I COME !!

ON TO THE NEXT ONE!

Dog was wrong
to think he could
hide anything from her
Eye of the Cormorant.

NOT STRONG, BUT DETER-MINED.

TIMID, BUT NOT WEAK.

NOT INTELLI-GENT, BUT CUNNING.

NOT POWER-FUL, BUT NOT POWER-LESS.

CHAPTER FOUR

RAT, MONKEY, CHICKEN, BOAR

SHE IS **NIWATORI**, THE FIGHTER OF THE **CHICKEN**.

HER APPROACH TO FIGHTING NOW IS THE SAME AS WHEN SHE FIRST TOOK UP ARMS.

SHE HAS NO MEMORIES OF HER YOUTH BEFORE THE AGE OF 15, WHEN SHE KILLED HER MOTHER AND FATHER WITH HER OWN HANDS.

THROUGHOUT HER EARLY CHILDHOOD, SHE WAS THE VICTIM OF ABUSE SO ABHORRENT THAT WORDS FAIL TO DESCRIBE IT.

I? WHO AM I? WHO AM I? WHO AM

FWUF

FWUF

FWUF

SHE HAS LIVED THE LIFE OF A WARRIOR EVER SINCE.

SHE WAS ADOPTED INTO THE **NIWA FAMILY**, A RENOWNED MERCENARY CLAN, WHO SOON DISCOVERED HER ABILITY TO CONTROL BIRDS.

...OR CONVIC-TIONS OF HER OWN.

...VOLI-TION...

WITHOUT A PAST, SHE HAS NO REAL PURPOSE...

SHE IS TOLD TO FIGHT, AND SO SHE FIGHTS.

SHE IS TOLD TO KILL, AND SO SHE KILLS.

...AND SO MANY BETRAY-ALS...

...SO MUCH DECEP-TION...

AFTER YEARS OF SO MUCH KILLING...

...AND WHO ARE HER **FOES.**

...WHO ARE HER **FRIENDS...**

...SHE'S BEGINNING TO FIND IT HARD TO TELL...

SUCH THINGS ARE SITUATIONAL.

AS MUTABLE AS THE WEATHER.

WHEN DEALING WITH OTHER PEOPLE, SHE CARES LITTLE ABOUT THEIR AFFINITIES, OR HOW MUCH STRONGER THEY MIGHT BE IN SKILL OR PERSONALITY.

BUT THAT DOESN'T CONCERN HER MUCH.

THE VERY BEST FIGHTER MIGHT HAVE AN OFF DAY.

AND THE WEAKEST MIGHT HIT UPON A LUCKY BREAK.

SUCH VAGARIES NEVER CAPTURED HER ATTENTION.

AND EVIL-DOERS CAN REFORM.

THE VIRTUOUS CAN BE COR-RUPTED.

AFTER ALL, OTHER PEOPLE...

...ARE JUST BACK-GROUND ELEMENTS.

IT'S MYSELF I NEED TO BE THINKING OF.

AND THAT RULE SUITS HER SURPRISING-LY WELL.

THE ZODIAC WAR IS GOVERNED BY ONE PRINCIPAL RULE— VICTORY GOES TO THE LAST SURVIVOR...

FW

...CHICKEN VS. BOAR, IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

THE NEXT BATTLE ...

...AN OPPONENT WHO'S ALREADY DEAD?

BUT HOW DOES CHICKEN INTEND TO FIGHT...

THANKS TO DOTSUKU'S HELP, MY STRENGTH'S BEEN MAXED OUT.

THE EFFECT WILL EVENTUALLY WEAR OFF... SO I'D LIKE TO PUT AN END TO THIS CONTEST BEFORE IT DOES.

BUT I'M NOT GOING TO RUSH INTO A REAL FIGHT UNTIL I'VE HAD TIME TO GET USED TO THIS NEW POWER.

THAT WOULD BE A LITTLE TOO RECKLESS FOR ME.

WSH

WSH

...I'LL CALL ON MY BIRDS.

SWF

INSTEAD ...

DUN

DUN

DUN

GYU

WWW

I KILL BY PECKS.

DUN DUN DUN

I GIVE TO YOU MY SKY BURIAL.

DUN

TH-THE BIRDS...

DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN

...ARE FEASTING ON BOAR'S CORPSE...!

DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN

THUNK

KRK

KRK

KRK

TA TA TA TA

KR MBL KR. MB L

OH

RATL RATL

WHAT HAD SHE CALLED HER ABILITY? MAKING IT RAIN?

SHE KILLED SO MANY.

MY BIRDS...

KLTR KLTR

SHE COULD FIRE HER MACHINE GUNS WITHOUT EVER HAVING TO STOP TO RELOAD.

I JUST ASSUMED THAT SHE'D LOST THAT POWER WHEN SHE DIED.

BUT I GUESS I WAS WRONG...

GOOD THING I DECIDED NOT TO TEST OUT MY NEW STRENGTH ON HER!

I WOULD'VE BEEN BLOWN TO BITS!

GRIN

EVEN THIS WAS COSTLY. THE BIRDS WERE TOO FEW BEFORE...

KAW

KAW

KAW

...AND NOW THEY'RE EVEN FEWER.

WORSE YET, THEY MUST BE FULL.

HMMM...

IF I RUN INTO SNAKE'S CORPSE NOW, I COULD BE IN TROUBLE...

WHICH MEANS ...

GLANCE

!!

SHF

SHF

SHE'S GONE ?!

...

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO AT A TIME LIKE THIS.

SO THEN...

...BUT I'D RATHER KEEP MY DOWN-TIME TO MYSELF.

I DON'T MIND IF HE DOCUMENTS MY FIGHTS...

TP

TP

TP

TP

WHO KNOWS WHEN I'LL GET ANOTHER CHANCE!

EAT, OF COURSE!

WOW! THEY EVEN HAVE *ONSEN* EGGS!

THEY'RE MY FAVORITE! ♪

LET'S SEE. *ONIGIRI*, SAND-WICHES...

♪

AND WHO CAN FIGHT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH? NOT ME!

!!

SHK

HEY, LADY.

DU

DU

!!

IT'S HIM...

...

HE PRACTICALLY SLEPT THROUGH THE OPENING CEREMONY.

IT'S THAT KID.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU.

AHH, GIVE IT A REST.

!!

FISH

...I MIGHT AS WELL INTRO-DUCE MYSELF.

FWP

WELL, SEEING HOW WE'VE NEVER MET BE-FORE...

THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA BELIEVE THAT!

BDMP

HE'S LYING.

BDMP

BDMP

I KILL INEXOR-ABLY.

I AM NEZUMI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT.

YA

AA

WN

...HE'S THE ONLY ONE I COULDN'T FIND OUT ANYTHING ABOUT.

EVEN WITH MY EYE OF THE COR-MORANT...

RAT? THIS BOY IS THE RAT?

DUN

...

DUN

...

I KILL BY *PECKS.*

OH, ER, I'M *NIWATORI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *CHICKEN.*

AND YOU ARE?

DOES HE MEAN AT THE BEGIN-NING?

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

...AND SHE ASKED IF ANYONE WOULD COOPERATE ...

WHEN MONKEY WAS TALKING ABOUT SOME SCHEME FOR US ALL TO WIN...

OH, THAT'S RIGHT...

YOU RAISED YOUR HAND BACK THERE, DIDN'T YOU?

BACK WHERE?

I'LL TAKE YOU TO WHERE **MONKEY** IS.

COME WITH ME.

ガバッ

!!

GIVE UP.

I KILL IN *PEACE.*

I'M *SHARYŪ,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *MONKEY.*

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.



INŌNOSHISHI,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE BOAR

REAL NAME:
TOSHIKO INŌ

HEIGHT:
176 CM
WEIGHT:
60 KG

"I wish for love."

"I wish to win."



DOTSUKU,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE DOG

REAL NAME:
MICHIO
TSUKUI

HEIGHT:
177 CM
WEIGHT:
52 KG

"I wish for myself."



NIWATORI, THE FIGHTER OF THE CHICKEN

REAL NAME: RYŌKA NIWA

HEIGHT: 153 CM
WEIGHT: 42 KG

"I wish for peace."



**SHARYŪ,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE
MONKEY**

**REAL NAME:
MISAKI YŪKI**

**HEIGHT:
150 CM
WEIGHT:
40 KG**

Although this is my third manga collaboration with NISIOISIN (*Medaka Box* and *Shōnen Shōjo* were the other two), it's also my first manga based on an existing novel, and through this work I'm once again experiencing a beginner's nervousness.

At the same time, I'm tremendously enjoying my return to drawing battle scenes, even if I sometimes get carried away and cause more destruction to the city than needed. (*lol*)

Whether you are a fan of the original novel, or if you were brought in through the anime, or if this manga is your introduction to the Zodiac War, I hope you'll go on this journey with me until the very end. I'll be doing my best!

—Akira Akatsuki

AKIRA AKATSUKI

Born 1977, Akira Akatsuki made his manga debut in 2003 with *Z-XL Dai* in *Akamaru Jump*. He later published a number of one shots, such as *Angel Agent*, *Contractor M&Y* and *Little Brave Pukateriosu*, in *Jump the Revolution!*, *Weekly Shonen Jump* and *Akamaru Jump*, respectively. His most notable work and first major collaboration with NISIOISIN, *Medaka Box*, premiered in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 2009 and concluded in 2013. He published two more one shots, *Toshokan Kyuuseishu Kurabu* (*Library Savior Club*) and *Musume Iri-Hako* (*The Girl in the Box*), the latter of which was another collaboration with NISIOISIN, before starting work on *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* in 2017 on *Jump+*.

NISIOISIN

Born 1981. In 2002, NISIOISIN's novel *The Beheading Cycle* won the 23rd Mephisto Prize and became his debut publication. Among his numerous novels are the *Zaregoto* series, the *Monogatari* series, the *Densetsu* series, and the *Bōkyaku Tantei* series. He also wrote the manga tie-in novel *Death Note: Another Note*. As a manga writer, he has appeared in the *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine with his series *Medaka Box* and his *Ōgiri* series of one-shot manga stories have seen the pages of *Weekly Shonen Jump*, *Jump SQ*, *Weekly Young Jump* and *Bessatsu Margaret*.

HIKARU NAKAMURA

Born 1984. Illustrator Hikaru Nakamura made her debut in 2001 with her manga *Kairi no Sue* in the *Monthly Gangan Wing* magazine. Her other works include *Arakawa Under the Bridge*, published in *Young Gangan*, and 2009 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize winner *Saint Young Men*, published in *Monthly Morning Two*. She previously collaborated with NISIOISIN for his *Ōgiri* series with "The One Wish I Really Want to Come True, and the Ninety-Nine Others I Don't So Much."

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

1

SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

TRANSLATION
Nathan A. Collins

LETTERING
Mark McMurray

RETOUCH
James Gaubatz

DESIGN
Alice Lewis

EDITOR
Marlene First

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence and adult themes.



viz.com



shonenjump.com

TAISEN
C WAR


JUNI T
ZODIA

2

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

MANGA BY

AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY

NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY

HIKARU NAKAMURA

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
NISIOISIN

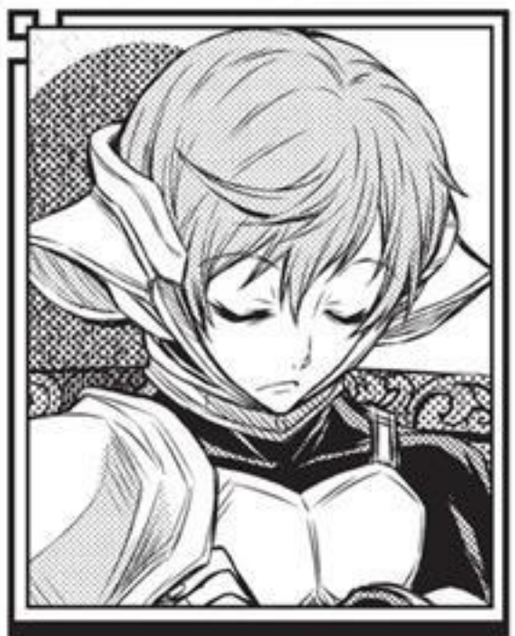
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

2



The Fighter of the Tiger
TORA

Kills with Drunken Power



The Fighter of the Rat
NEZUMI

Kills Inexorably



The Fighter of the Rabbit
USAGI

Kills with Distinction
• *Necromanticist*



The Fighter of the Ox
USHII

Just Kills

JUNI TAISEN
ZODIAC WAR
THE TWELVE FIGHTERS

1

The Zodiac War is held every twelve years.

2

Twelve fierce warriors take on the names of the Zodiac.

3

The sole victor will be granted any single wish.

4

The twelve warriors each possess unique superpowers.





The Fighter of the Dog
DOTSUKU

Kills with Bites
- *Michio Tsukui*
- *Mad Dog's Vise*



The Fighter of the Monkey
SHARYŪ

Kills in Peace



The Fighter of the Horse
UUMA

Kills in Silence



The Fighter of the Dragon
TATSUMI BROTHER,
the Elder

Kills for Money



The Fighter of the Boar
INŌNOSHISHI

Kills in Abundance
- *Toshiko Inō*
- *Making It Rain*



The Fighter of the Chicken
NIWATORI

Kills by Pecks
- *Ryōka Niwa*
- *Eye of the Cormorant*



The Fighter of the Sheep
HITSUJII

Kills with Deception



The Fighter of the Snake
TATSUMI BROTHER,
the Younger

Kills for Money

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 5	Rat, Ox, Monkey, Chicken	005
CHAPTER 6	Ox, Chicken	025
CHAPTER 7	Rat, Monkey	045
CHAPTER 8	Rat, Rabbit, Snake, Monkey	069
CHAPTER 9	Rat, Rabbit, Snake, Monkey	089
CHAPTER 10	Rabbit, Snake, Sheep, Monkey	109
CHAPTER 11	Tiger, Sheep	129
CHAPTER 12	Tiger, Sheep	151

WHEN I RAISED MY HAND AND VOLUN-TEERED TO JOIN MONKEY'S PEACE-SEEKING ALLIANCE ...

...I DID IT FULLY INTENDING TO BETRAY THEM.

CHAPTER FIVE

RAT, OX, MONKEY, CHICKEN

I MAY USE OTHERS FOR MY OWN ENDS EVERY NOW AND THEN...

...BUT NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS WOULD I EVER **ACTUALLY** TEAM UP WITH ANYONE.

I WILL DO ANYTHING IN THE NAME OF SELF-PRESER-VATION.

THAT'S THE ONLY WAY A WEAKLING LIKE ME CAN BE GUARANTEED TO SURVIVE AND WIN.

AND MONKEY!

RAT!

CHAPTER FIVE

RAT, OX, MONKEY, CHICKEN

I CAN KILL THEM BOTH WHEN-EVER I PLEASE!

I'VE ALREADY GOT TWO BEAST GEMS. AND I'VE BEEN POWERED UP, THANKS TO DOG'S POISON.

DOOOOOOOM

I CAN KILL THEM WHENEVER!

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

I CAN KILL THEM...

...

HERE, THIS IS FOR YOU.

FWIP

I SHOULD'VE ASKED IF YOU'D PREFER COFFEE INSTEAD OF TEA.

AH! WHERE ARE MY MANNERS?

UM, NO...

EITHER IS FINE...

I CAN KILL THEM WHENEVER I FEEL LIKE IT.

SO WHAT'S THE HARM IN LETTING THIS PLAY OUT FIRST...

OH, THAT'S A RELIEF.

IT'S HOT. BE CAREFUL.

...

ALL THAT WALKING TIRED ME OUT.

I'M TAKING A NAP.

PLOP

YOU'RE SLEEPING *NOW*?!

WHAT'S THIS KID'S DEAL ANYWAY?

WHY DID HE MAKE ME COME DOWN HERE WITH HIM?

WELL... I GUESS HE DIDN'T **MAKE** ME COME WITH HIM.

IF ANYTHING, I JUST TAGGED ALONG. HE EVEN KEPT HIS BACK TO ME THE WHOLE TIME.

...

...THAT I'D SEEN HIM BEFORE.

I DID HAVE THE FEEL-ING...

I GUESS WE REALLY HAVEN'T MET...

ZZZZZ

ZZZZZ

BUT TALKING TO HIM DOESN'T STIR UP ANY MEMORIES.

AH, UM, IT'S FINE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A BAD KID. HE'S JUST, YOU KNOW...

SORRY ABOUT HIM.

I-I KNOW YOU'RE THE FIGHTER OF THE ***MONKEY***, BUT THAT'S ALL...

WELL...

SO... FIRST OFF, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

YOU RAISED YOUR HAND FOR ME IN THE HIGH-RISE, DIDN'T YOU?

I AM *SHARYŪ*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *MONKEY*.

I KILL IN *PEACE*.

WELL THEN, LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF.

"I KILL IN PEACE"? WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?!

Gah!

I AM *NIWATORI*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *CHICKEN*.

I KILL BY *PECKS*.

Y-YEAH.

ME TOO.

OF COURSE.

GR

I'M GLAD THAT WE'RE ABLE TO HAVE A REAL CONVERSA-TION.

I APPRECIATE YOUR STEPPING FORWARD BACK THERE.

IN

THIS WOMAN ...

...

DO

OF

GRA

ER

?

IS SOME-THING WRONG ?

N-NO, NOTHING AT ALL.

GRIN

...THEN KILLING HER WOULD BE EASY, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT I'VE BEEN BOOSTED.

IF SHE'S REALLY A KIND PERSON, AND SHE REALLY HOPES FOR PEACE...

GRP

SHE'S NOT LYING— NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT.

HER HEART RATE, HER BODY TEMPERATURE ARE COMPLETELY STEADY. WITH MY HEIGHTENED POWER, I CAN LOOK AT HER AND SEE IT FOR MYSELF.

CELIA. No; when creature, may sh the fire? Though flout at Fortune, this fool to cut o LIND. Indeed, th Nature, when Fo ral the cutter-off CELIA. Peradven work neither, bu our natural wits goddesses, and h whetstone; for a fool is the whets wit! Whither wa Mistress, you mu father. CELIA. W ger? TOUCHSTO I was bid to com

EVERYONE HAS AT LEAST SOME MALICIOUS-NESS IN THEM SOMEWHERE. BUT I DON'T SENSE ANY IN HER...

...BUT WITH MY STATS MAXED OUT LIKE THIS...

ZZZ

ZZZ

SURE, WITH RAT HERE, IT WOULD BE TWO AGAINST ONE...

...WITH EVERYONE WHO RAISED THEIR HANDS.

I JUST WISH THERE WAS A WAY THAT WE COULD JOIN BACK UP...

...I KNOW I'LL WIN!

FWSSSH

SWOOOO

!!

...WITH NO ONE FIGHTING OR GETTING HURT...

...EVEN NOW THAT THE BATTLE IS ALREADY UNDER WAY?

WAIT, IS SHE SERIOUSLY STILL THINKING ABOUT FOLLOWING HER PLAN TO WIN THE ZODIAC WAR...

DOES THAT MEAN SHE REALLY WAS GOING TO TEAM UP WITH THE OTHER THREE...

SHE'S NOT LYING...

AND EVEN RABBIT ?!

OX.

HORSE.

EVEN I CAN SEE HOW STUPID THAT WOULD BE!

?

NO PERSON SHOULD BE THAT MUCH OF A SAINT!

THAT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A PIPE DREAM— IT'LL NEVER HAPPEN.

ENDING THE ZODIAC WAR WITH NO VIOLENCE OR DEATH...

...

...ARE ALREADY *DEAD.*

SEVERAL ...

WHAT'S GOING ON ABOVE-GROUND?

NIWATORI, HAVE YOU COME ACROSS ANYONE ELSE?

!!

...THAT MAKES AT LEAST THREE DEAD ALREADY.

INCLUDING *SNAKE*, WHO WAS DEAD BEFORE THE START...

!!

BOAR AND *DOG* HAVE BEEN KILLED— AND THEY'RE JUST THE ONES I KNOW ABOUT.

Uff

IT CAN.

...

...CAN THAT SUREFIRE PLAN OF YOURS STILL WORK?

EVEN WITH THEM DEAD...

I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

SO... TWO MORE HAVE DIED SINCE WE SPLIT UP...

BUT IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO REVEAL THE DETAILS, I'M AFRAID.

I CAN'T AFFORD INACTION ANY LONGER— WE'LL HAVE TO GET MOVING AS SOON AS WE'VE EATEN.

THAT MEANS WE MAY SEE MORE VICTIMS YET.

NIWATORI, YOU'LL DINE WITH US, WON'T YOU?

!!

SHE'S NOT JUST SAYING THAT— SHE'S ACTUALLY UPSET.

SHE'S NOT EVEN TRYING TO HIDE THAT THIS HAS THROWN HER...

I...

...

GWOOOOOOOO

I SHOULD HAVE JUST PRETENDED TO GO ALONG WITH HER.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? HOW STUPID AM I?

TP TP

...THEN RUN THOSE TRUSTING FOOLS THROUGH WITH MY SPADING FORK.

THE PLAN WAS OBVIOUS— PRETEND TO ALLY MYSELF WITH THEM, GET IN CLOSE...

GRP

TCH TCH

WHERE'S THAT DETERMINED, CRAFTY PERSON I USED TO BE?

TP TP TP TP

IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, PLEASE COME FIND ME.

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WELCOME HERE.

...

I SEE. THAT'S UNFOR-TUNATE.

...BUT I CAN'T GO ALONG WITH YOU.

I'M SORRY TO DIS-APPOINT YOU ...

...NEVER LOSE HOPE!

AND PLEASE...

...PIERCED RIGHT THROUGH TO MY HEART.

THOSE CLEAR, UNSUSPECTING EYES...

THOSE EYES...


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

DUN

...IT FIXED MY MESSED-UP MIND.

HFF

THAT DRUG DID MORE THAN ENHANCE MY PHYSICAL ABILITIES...

HFF!

HFF!

THIS MUST BE BECAUSE OF THAT *ONE-MAN ARMY* STUFF...

...LIKE KINDNESS AND SINCERITY.

...BY BOGUS NOTIONS ...

THAT'S WHY I'VE LET MYSELF BECOME TORN APART...

RSTL

I'VE LOST THE PARTS OF ME THAT MAKE ME WHO I AM.

I'VE LOST MY BACK-STABBING WAYS.



OX!!

...

ARE YOU ALONE?

"Several are
already dead."
Chicken didn't
need to be so
blunt about it,
but some
malicious part
of her hoped to
smash that
woman's
earnest
idealism.

OF ALL TWELVE FIGHTERS, HE IS THE MOST RE-NOWNED.

OF ALL TWELVE FIGHTERS, HE IS THE MOST FAMOUS.

!!

TP TP TP TP

CHAPTER SIX

OX, CHICKEN

...A FIGHTER AMONG FIGHTERS.

HE IS OX...

HFF

HOW COULD ANYONE NOT?

BUT OF COURSE I KNOW.

HFF

I TOLD DOTSUKU I DON'T KNOW WHO OX IS.

HFF

ANYONE WHOSE FEET HAVE EVER TOUCHED A BATTLE-FIELD...

...WOULD KNOW WHO HE IS.

I ASKED YOU A QUESTION.

ARE YOU ALONE?

BUT NO ONE REALLY KNOWS...

...JUST HOW STRONG HE TRULY IS.

BECAUSE EVERYONE WHO HAS FOUND OUT...

...IS ALREADY DEAD.

IF ANYONE ELSE IS WITH YOU...

...

...I'D LIKE YOU TO GO AHEAD AND BRING THEM OUT.

ス

YOU SEE...

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO ME HOW MANY OF YOU THERE ARE.

"...THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER."

"PEOPLE CALL HIM..."

"...AND SURVIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT."

"NO ONE HAS EVER STOOD ON A BATTLE-FIELD AGAINST HIM..."

IS THE NEXT BATTLE ABOUT TO START—OX VERSUS CHICKEN?

HE'S ONLY DRAWN HIS SWORD, BUT IT FEELS LIKE A DECLARATION OF WAR!

!!

...BUT OX IS DIFFERENT. THE WAY HE CARRIES HIMSELF IS A DECLARATION—BOLD AND WITHOUT RESERVATION...

"I DON'T NEED TO HIDE OR CHANGE WHO I AM."

CHICKEN WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO BOOST HER ABILITIES TO THEIR ABSOLUTE LIMITS...

HE'S COVERED IN BLOOD ...

HFI HFI HFI

I-I THOUGHT ...

...YOU WERE A PACIFIST.

IF THE RUMORS ARE TRUE...

...WHOEVER THAT BLOOD BELONGS TO MUST BE DEAD, RIGHT?

NOW THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN SCAT-TERED...

...

THERE'S NO POINT IN THAT ANYMORE.

I ONLY VOLUNTEERED TO JOIN HER BECAUSE I WAS LOOKING FOR A TEAM.

NO, I THINK THAT'S **JUST** MONKEY.

...

SH

F

THAT PEACE TREATY IS DEAD IN THE WATER.

I SHOULD TRICK HIM INTO TRUSTING ME AND STRIKE HIM FROM BEHIND...

...OR DISTRACT HIM WITH MY BIRDS AND MAKE MY ESCAPE.

ATTEMPTING TO FIGHT **OX** HEAD-ON LIKE THIS IS TOO RECKLESS TO EVEN CONSIDER!

WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

BDMP

BDMP

BI OO NK

IF I TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE, IT WON'T MATTER IF HE'S A **NATURAL-BORN** SLAYER OR NOT.

AND OX DOESN'T KNOW THAT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH THE BOOST FROM THE **ONE MAN ARMY**, I'M AS STRONG AS I'LL EVER BE.

IS IT BECAUSE, PERHAPS...

...MONKEY IS SOME-WHERE NEARBY?

WAIT, WHAT MADE YOU BRING UP THE PEACE TREATY ALL OF A SUDDEN?

ALL RIGHT. I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.

...

HE'S QUICK-WITTED TOO.

...

!!

I'LL ACT LIKE I'M WEAK AND VULNERABLE, THEN ATTACK HIM FROM BEHIND...

W-WHAT AM I DOING?

?

?

?

YOU MEAN TO FIGHT ME TO PROTECT MONKEY, IS THAT IT?

WELL, WELL. I DIDN'T FIGURE YOU FOR THAT TYPE.

...

"IF YOU WANT TO PASS, YOU'LL HAVE TO DEFEAT ME FIRST," HUH?

IT'S NOT WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU.

THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF MOTIVATION THAT WILL MAKE YOU FIGHT WELL.

I SUGGEST YOU RECON-SIDER.

THIS ISN'T THE SLIGHTEST, TINIEST BIT LIKE ME AT ALL.

I KNOW IT'S NOT!

...MESSING WITH MY HEAD THAT BADLY?

IS THAT **ONE MAN ARMY** DRUG...

EVER SINCE I WENT DOWN INTO THOSE SEWERS, SOMETHING'S BEEN WRONG WITH ME.

コポ

コポ

BUT YOU? YOU'RE THE KIND OF PERSON WHO NEEDS TO FIGHT FOR HERSELF.

THAT MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR SOMEONE ELSE, MAYBE.

...

HE'S NOT LYING, BUT I KNOW THAT ALREADY.

HE SOUNDS AS IF HE'S JUST STATING HIS UNFILTERED THOUGHTS AS THEY COME TO HIM.

AND THAT'S WHY I NEED TO LOWER MY WEAPON AND ESCAPE WHILE I STILL CAN...

THAT'S HOW I'VE LIVED MY LIFE UNTIL NOW. THAT'S HOW I'VE SURVIVED.

BECAUSE EVERYTHING HE'S SAYING IS TRUE.

I KILL BY *PECKS.*

I AM *NIWATORI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *CHICKEN.*

?!

SHI

W-WHY AM I ANNOUNCING MYSELF...?

I *JUST KILL.*

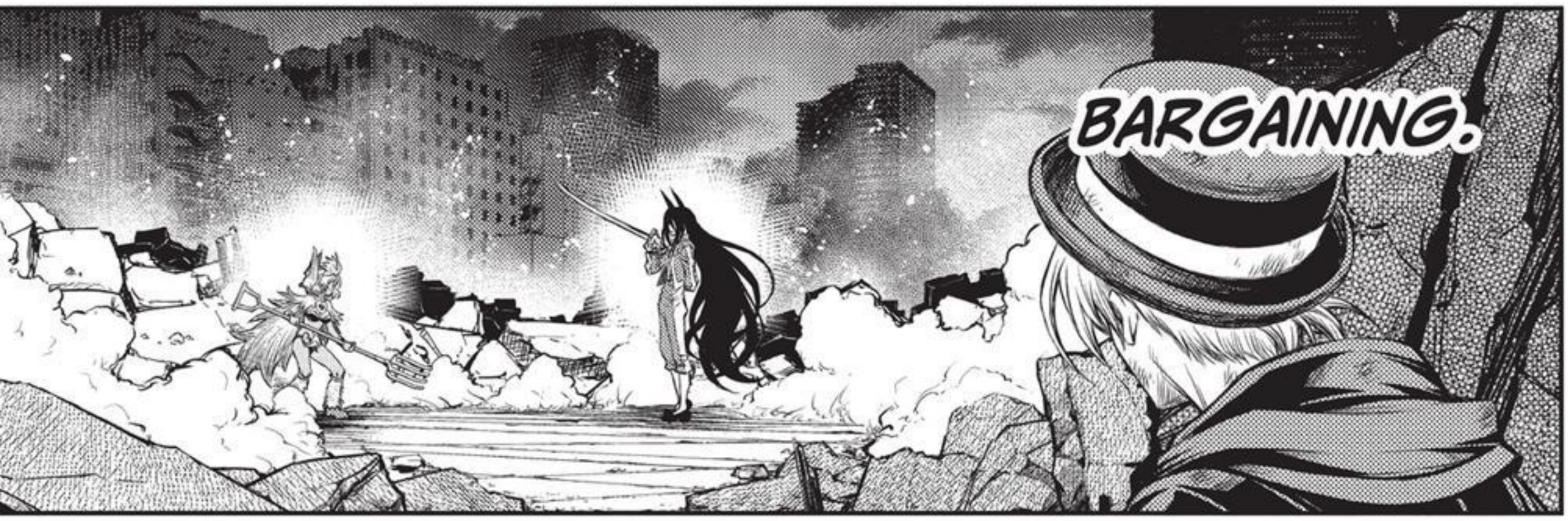
I AM *USHII,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX.*

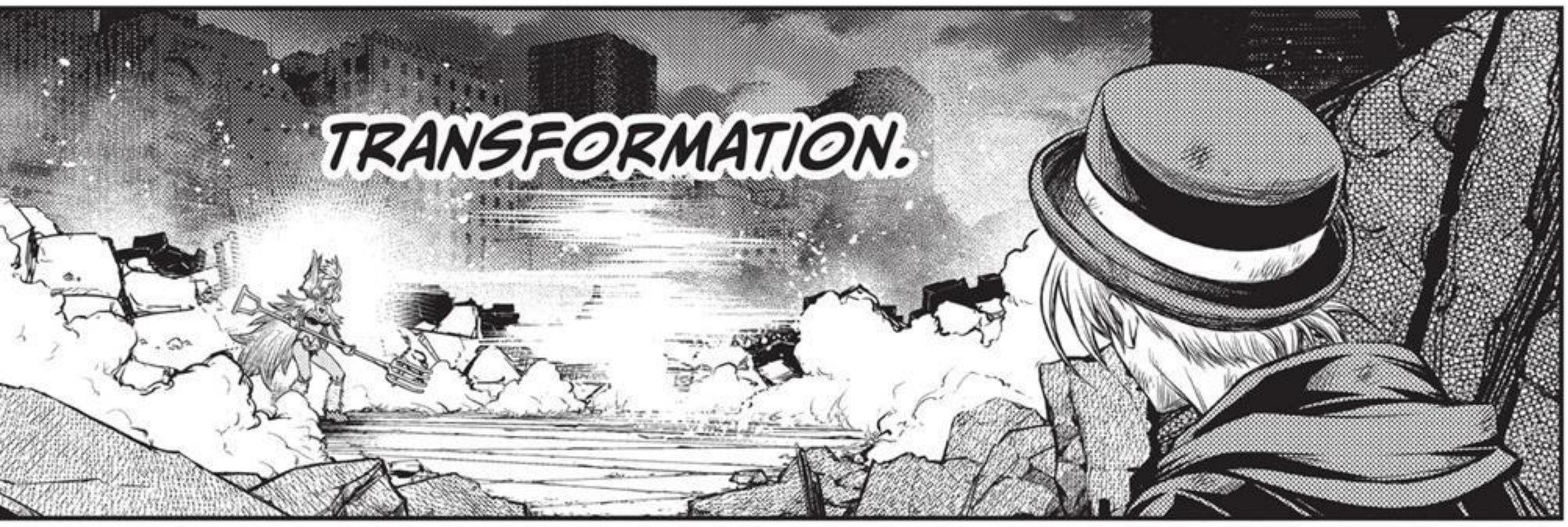
SHI

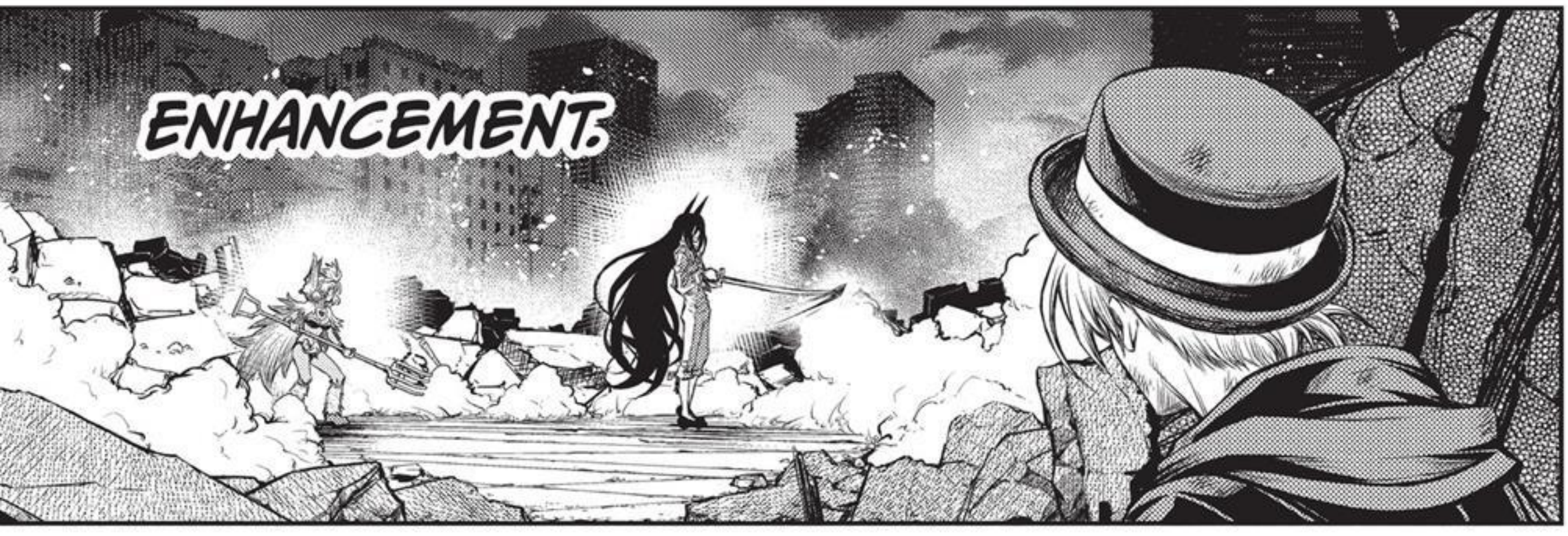
IS THIS THE FIRST TIME I'M GOING TO FIGHT BECAUSE I CHOOSE TO?

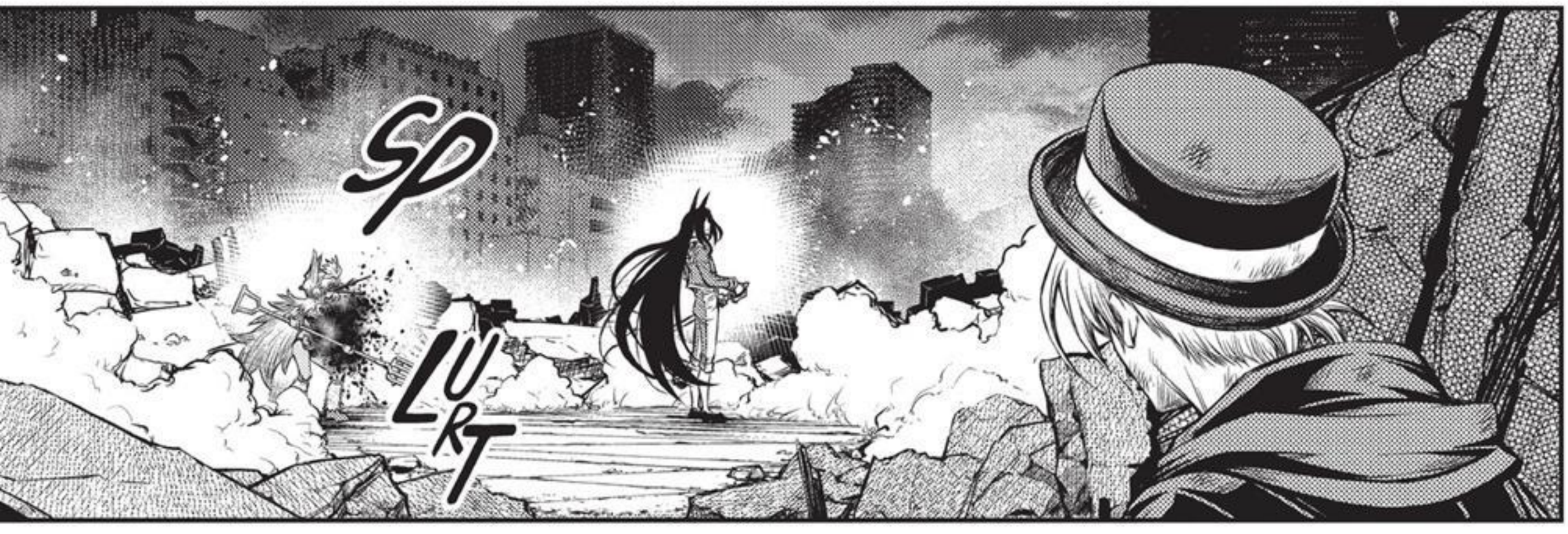
WITH THAT DOPING, MY POWER IS MAXED OUT. I CAN DO—


SKILL.
STRATEGY.
DECEPTION.
SPLURT


BARGAINING.


TRANSFORMATION.


ENHANCEMENT.


SD
LURT

...BECAUSE HE IS A NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.

OX DOESN'T NEED TO RELY ON ANY OF THOSE THINGS...

HE'S SO INCOMPRE-HENSIBLY POWERFUL.

HE'S ...

...

HFF

WELL ...

HFF

SO THIS IS ALL I COULD AMOUNT TO.

HFF

...

AH...

HFF

...I DIE A SOMEWHAT NOBLE DEATH.

I GUESS, IF IT'S LIKE THIS...

KAW

KAW

KAW

KAW

COME, IF YOU'D LIKE...

COME AND EAT YOUR FILL.

YOU MUST BE GETTING HUNGRY AGAIN.

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING, MY BIRDS.

...



To die
without pain
or suffering,
by the well-honed
edge of an expert
swordsman's blade,
might have been
the best thing that
had ever happened
to her.

THE FIGHTER OF THE MONKEY— REAL NAME, MISAKI YŪKI.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RAT, MONKEY

FWP

G R R R P

TOK

BORN JULY 7. SHE'S 150 CENTI-METERS TALL AND WEIGHS 40 KILO-GRAMS.

SUUU

SUUU

KR
ACK
KR
BL
PLOK
PLIK
PLIK
YEAH!
...

16

THAT WAS MY 1,000TH GANSAI RYŪ HA-BOULDER-CRACKING DESTRUCTION WAVE!

I'VE FINALLY PERFECTED IT!!

BOW

CHAPTER SEVEN

RAT, MONKEY

AS BOTH A PACIFIST AND A WARRIOR ...

...SHE IS A HERO SECOND TO NONE.

SHE HAS SO FAR BROUGHT PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO 314 WARS AND 229 INTERNAL CONFLICTS.

I THINK SHE'S PROBABLY DEAD BY NOW.

ER, I MEAN RISKY-LOOKING LADY...

THAT RISQUÉ-LOOKING—

HER FATE...

...IS PLAIN ENOUGH FOR ANYONE TO SEE.

YAWN

I'D HARDLY CALL IT A SPECIAL ABILITY.

IS THAT YOUR SPECIAL ABILITY?

ARE YOU ABLE TO SENSE SUCH THINGS?

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT, NEZUMI?

MAYBE SOME PEOPLE HAVE A SHADOW OF DEATH OVER THEM, AND I CAN JUST SEE IT BETTER THAN OTHERS.

AL-THOUGH... WELL, YOU KNOW...

RATS HAVE A KNACK FOR FLEEING SHIPS THAT ARE ABOUT TO SINK.

IF THAT LADY IS DEAD, THEN IT'S *YOUR* FAULT.

MISS SHARYŪ.

BUT IF I'M RIGHT...

SHF

...THE *WEAKER* SHE GOT.

THE MORE SHE TALKED WITH YOU...

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT?

ANOTHER INSIGHT?

WHEN SHE LEFT, EVEN A NORMAL PERSON COULD'VE KILLED HER.

YOUR GOODWILL CHANGED SOMETHING IN HER. YOU **REFORMED** HER.

SHE WENT FROM FAINTHEARTED TO JUST PLAIN FAINT.

...

WASN'T HE SLEEPING THE WHOLE TIME?

TO A ROGUE LIKE HER, YOUR LACK OF VENOM IS ITSELF A DEADLY POISON.

I CAN BE A LITTLE SLOW TO PICK UP ON SUCH THINGS.

I'M SORRY ...

ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVOKE ME?

LISTEN, NEZUMI...

OR IS HE JUST ...

EVEN IF I CAN READ SOMEONE'S FATE, I CAN'T READ THEIR MIND.

SHF

IS THAT SO...?

WELL, LET'S TALK ABOUT SOME-THING ELSE THEN.

I CAN'T UNDER-STAND HIM VERY WELL...

THIS GUY...

SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

AND WHATEVER ELSE HAPPENS, YOU WON'T BE REFORMING ME.

ALTHOUGH I'M SADDENED THAT FEWER PEOPLE REMAIN TO BE SAVED.

I CAN.

ASSUMING THAT LADY IS IN FACT DEAD, THAT MEANS FOUR OF US HAVE BEEN KILLED.

DEAD

BUT WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE YOUR PLAN?

CAN YOU STILL PULL OFF YOUR SUREFIRE PLAN FOR VICTORY?

I'M NOT CARELESSLY OPTIMISTIC.

PEACE TREATIES HAVE TO BE ADAPTED TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

!!

YOU'VE GOT MORE THAN ONE?!

ALLOW ME TO CORRECT YOU—I DON'T HAVE JUST *ONE* PLAN!

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE IN YOUR ASSUMPTIONS.

LISTEN, NEZUMI.

...

AND THAT I'M NOT GOING TO REFORM YOU.

YOU SAY YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT STOPPING THIS WAR.

I DON'T FIGURE YOU FOR A PACIFIST.

...

IF THAT'S SO, THEN WHY DID YOU AGREE TO JOIN ME?

...

WELL, I'VE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT STOPPING THE FIGHT.

WURL

SO I'LL LEAVE THAT PART TO YOU.

!!

ACTUALLY, I HATE IT.

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I THINK ABOUT PEACE?

DAMN WASTES, ALL OF THEM. THE THOUGHT OF RISKING MY LIFE TO PROTECT THEIR MEANINGLESS EXISTENCES IS REVOLTING.

MY CLASS-MATES— PEACE HAS MADE THEM ALL GO SOFT.

WHEN I'M NOT OUT ON A BATTLEFIELD, I'M IN A NORMAL HIGH SCHOOL.

NO ONE IN THE WORLD HAS SAVED AS MANY LIVES AS YOU HAVE.

DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU?

...

ACTUALLY, THE SITUATION'S WORSE THAN THAT.. BY SAVING PEOPLE, YOU TURN THEM INTO GARBAGE.

BUT A DECENT AMOUNT OF THOSE YOU'VE SAVED ARE GARBAGE.

I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT THE MORE I PROTECT THEM...

...THE MORE I JUST WANT TO KILL THEM.

THEY THINK THAT PEOPLE LIKE US FIGHT BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE **WANT** TO DO.

THEY THINK OF WARS AND KILLING AS SOMEONE ELSE'S JOB.

IT WOULD BE EASY TO DISMISS SUCH EMOTIONS AS CHILDISH.

THOSE FEELINGS ARE A PRODUCT OF HIS AGE.

...

HOW THE HELL DO YOU COME TO TERMS WITH THAT?

SO TELL ME, MISS PACIFIST.

THE BEST I CAN DO...

...IS GIVE HIM AN HONEST AND DIRECT ANSWER.

I DON'T MAKE PEACE WITH IT.

I'VE STRUGGLED WITH IT MY WHOLE LIFE.

THE PERFECT ANSWER FROM A SAINT.

BUT TALK LIKE THAT DOESN'T REACH US MERE MORTALS.

...

AH.

I SEE.

...MERE MORTALS.

GWOOOOO

DOESN'T REACH...

GWOOOO

RMBL

HUH?

SO...

YOU'RE PRETTY STRONG, RIGHT?

AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BLASTED THE FLOOR APART, RIGHT?

COME ON, YOU CAN DROP THE MODESTY.

I COULDN'T SURVIVE ON A BATTLEFIELD IF I DIDN'T.

WELL... I KNOW SOME SELF-DEFENSE TACTICS.

!!

ZIP!

NOW IF YOU BOTH WOULD COME HERE...

EVERYONE ELSE— IF YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME TO SEEK ME OUT.

ZOOM

KRA

A

AHA

ASH!

KO

BOOM

IF I'D HESITATED EVEN A FRACTION OF A SECOND, THE BATTLE MIGHT REALLY HAVE ENDED THEN AND THERE.

THEY HAD A POWERFUL INTENT TO KILL.

BA-THMP

BA-THMP

SOMEONE INTENDED TO BRING THIS ZODIAC WAR TO A SWIFT CONCLUSION.

I SAID YOU CAN DROP THE MODESTY.

...AND TO GIVE EVERY-ONE ELSE THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE.

IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO ESCAPE ...

NO, I DON'T. I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO FIND OUT...

AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHO WAS SO INTENT ON KILLING US?

I BET IF YOU WANTED TO, YOU COULD HAVE FIGURED OUT WHO IT WAS.

IF YOU CHOSE TO FIGHT INSTEAD OF RUN...

...YOU COULD HAVE FOUND OUT AND DEFEATED THEM. TELL ME I'M WRONG.

...

I WON'T DENY IT AS A POSSI-BILITY.

BUT I DON'T USE MY POWER LIKE THAT.

FOR EVERY GREAT POWER, THERE IS A CORRECT WAY TO USE IT.

NEZUMI.

I THINK MAYBE WHOEVER WANTED TO KILL US HAD IT RIGHT.

HUH?

A CORRECT WAY.

...

!!

...A WHOLE LOT QUICKER THAN THIS EXHAUSTING PEACE PLAN OF YOURS.

THEIR WAY WOULD HAVE ENDED THE ZODIAC WAR...

...AND INSTEAD ENDED THIS BATTLE IN AN INSTANT, YOU'D SAVE MORE LIVES FASTER?

...BUT DON'T YOU THINK THAT IF YOU JUST WIELDED WHATEVER POWER IT IS THAT YOU HAVE...

YOU GO THROUGH ALL THIS TIME AND TROUBLE TO MAKE YOUR PEACE TREATIES AND TO OFFER CEASE-FIRES...

WHAT REASON DO YOU HAVE TO SAVE LIVES LIKE THOSE?

I MEAN... THINK ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE TAKE PART IN THE ZODIAC WAR.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...

AND IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY THAT EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS...

...OR THAT NOBODY IS TRULY BAD TO THE CORE...

PEOPLE LIKE THAT— *THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITH ALL OF THEM DEAD.*

NEZUMI.

...

WELL, THOSE ARE JUST *HOLLOW WORDS* FROM SOMEONE WHO *WON'T SEE REALITY.*

...
THEN YOU'D BETTER QUIT BEING A FIGHTER RIGHT NOW.

IF THAT'S TRULY WHAT YOU THINK ...

...

...TO FIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...

...BUT NO ONE ELSE HAS *FAILED* TO SAVE AS MANY AS I HAVE EITHER.

YOU SAID NO ONE IN THE WORLD HAS SAVED AS MANY PEOPLE AS I HAVE...

THERE ARE MANY WHO I TRIED TO SAVE BUT COULDN'T.

MORE THAN I COULD EVER COUNT.

AND...

...MORE THAN I COULD EVER FORGET.

I'VE SEEN AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF SENSELESS MASSACRES.

I'VE SEEN COUNTRIES DESTROYED.

PERVERSIONS OF JUSTICE HAVE BEEN SEARED INTO THE BACKS OF MY EYELIDS.

MASS DESTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL SITES.

NATURAL RESOURCES EXHAUSTED.

DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE.

REVENGE STRIKES AND COUNTER-ATTACKS.

MALE CHAUVINISM AND FEMALE CHAUVINISM.

FAMINE AND PLAGUE.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

ELDERS LEFT TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS.

CHILDREN KILLING THEIR PARENTS.

THE CULLING OF CHILDREN.

CULTURAL SUPPRESSION.

HUMANS HUNTED.

SLAVERY.

TREACHERY AND BETRAYAL.

INHUMANE WEAPONS.

I'VE STARED AT IT.

I'VE SEEN IT WITH NO END.

I'VE SEEN IT AND SEEN IT AND SEEN IT.

I'VE SEEN REALITY.

...

AND AFTER ALL THAT, I'VE CHOSEN MY WAY.

I CHOOSE NOT TO *END* WARS BUT TO *STOP* THEM.

I'VE PUT MYSELF THROUGH HELL...

...BUT I STILL WANT US ALL TO GET ALONG.

...

I WANT US ALL TO BE HAPPY.

...BOY.

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE MY *HOLLOW WORDS...*

GR

IN

She and the young man had
stuck together since almost
the very start of the Zodiac War,
but he rarely spoke. He had not
opened up to her, and had kept his
opinions to himself—until now.
"What's caused this change of heart?
Or is this a change at all?"

ONE HOUR HAS PASSED SINCE THE ZODIAC WAR BEGAN.

GWOOOOOOOO

...FOUR FIGHTERS ARE DEAD.

AND ALREADY ...

CHAPTER EIGHT

RAT, RABBIT, SNAKE, MONKEY

...ONE IS FAR AND AWAY THE MOST DANGEROUS ...

WOOOOOOOO

OF THE EIGHT WHO REMAIN ...

CHAPTER EIGHT

RAT, RABBIT, SNAKE, MONKEY

DO

HE IS USAGI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT.

DO

A NECRO-MANTICIST WITH THE ABILITY TO CONTROL THOSE HE KILLS.

DO

DO

OH

SHE

ZZZ

ZZZ

MAYBE I WENT TOO FAR. WAS I TOO HARD ON HIM?

...

...
BOY.

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE MY HOLLOW WORDS...

...TO FIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...

THE QUESTION NOW... IS WHAT TO DO NEXT.

I NEED TO THINK THIS THROUGH TO THE BEST OF MY INEXPERI-ENCE.

THAT JUST SHOWS HOW MUCH I'VE YET TO LEARN.

HAH

H

...CHICKEN HAS LOST HER LIFE TOO.

AND RAT SAYS ...

IF I'M TO BELIEVE WHAT CHICKEN SAID, THIS WAR HAS ALREADY CLAIMED THREE VICTIMS.

ZZZ

ZZZ

GLA

NCE

I'M SURPRISED THAT SO MANY FIGHTERS ARE SO ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN KILLING.

...SHOULD I WAIT A LITTLE LONGER FOR THE RIGHT CHANCE?

I HAVE TO DECIDE...

OR GO ABOVE-GROUND NOW?

EVERYONE HERE HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO FULFILL MOST ANY WISH THROUGH THEIR OWN EFFORTS...

RMBL RMBL RMBL

WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S NOT AN EASY CHOICE, BUT—

...RATHER THAN STAKING EVERYTHING ON THIS FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL

HRM? FIVE MORE MINUTES...

MMBL MMBL

NEZUMI, WAKE UP!

OW!

THWAK!

IT SOUNDS LIKE A HELICOPTER OR SOME-THING.

RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL

WAIT, WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE AGAINST VIOLENCE.

!!

SWAY

WHAT THE HECK ?

SWAY

WHATEVER IT IS, THERE'S MORE THAN ONE.

YEAH.

...BUT IT DOES SOUND LIKE SOMETHING CUTTING THROUGH THE AIR...

THERE COULDN'T BE A HELICOPTER DOWN HERE ...







A GIANT FLOCK OF DEAD BIRDS ?!

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

BIRDS ...!

A GIANT FLOCK OF BIRDS!

HAS HE NO REGARD FOR THE SANCTITY OF LIFE?

HAS HE NO RESPECT FOR DEAD ANIMALS?

THE NECRO-MANTICIST !!

...WE'LL HAVE A VERY HIGH CHANCE OF GETTING A TETANUS INFECTION!

EVEN IF WE DON'T GET KILLED, IF WE TRY TO FIGHT THIS MANY SMALL ANIMALS IN A FILTHY PLACE LIKE THIS...

THIS IS BAD, SHARYŪ.

THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM.

FW

O-
OKAY!

V

P

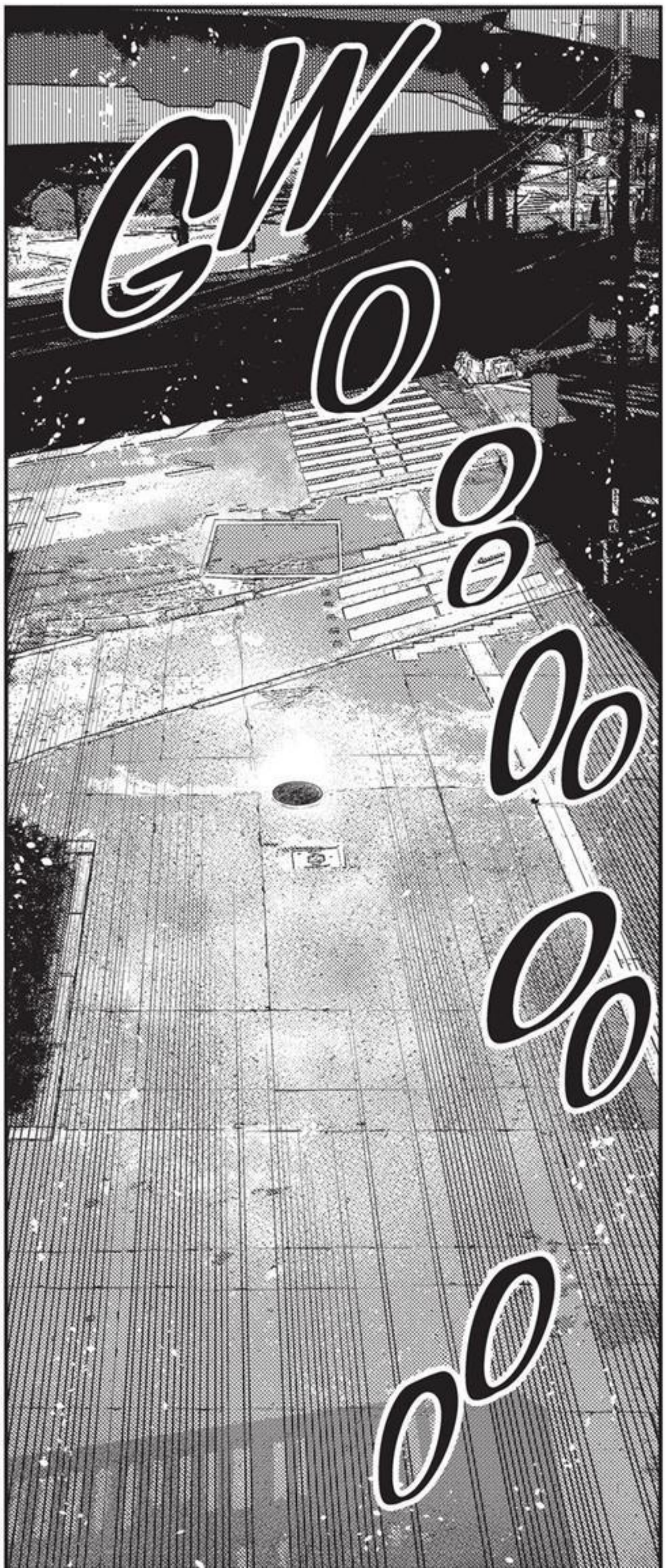
WE'RE
RUNNING!

WHAT
SHOULD
WE
DO?

GH

F









FF

SH

WP

B

WSH

AH

TOK

WS

OFF

WOBBL
WOBBL
SK
SH
DU
N
N
...
SNAKE'S CORPSE !!
HH
HHH

TOK

KLAK

FWP

YEAH.

BUT THAT SWORD...

NEZUMI, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

OOOM

TRMBL

TRMBL

KLAK

GRIP

I KILL WITH *DISTINC-TION.*

I AM *USAGI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *RABBIT.*

RABBIT !!

...

...FELL UNDER THE NECROMANTICIST'S CONTROL TOO.

HFF

HFF

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT— THE BIRDS KILLED BY BOAR'S WALKING CORPSE...

TP TP TP TP

FOUND THEM!

FW

...

P

I KILL IN *PEACE.*

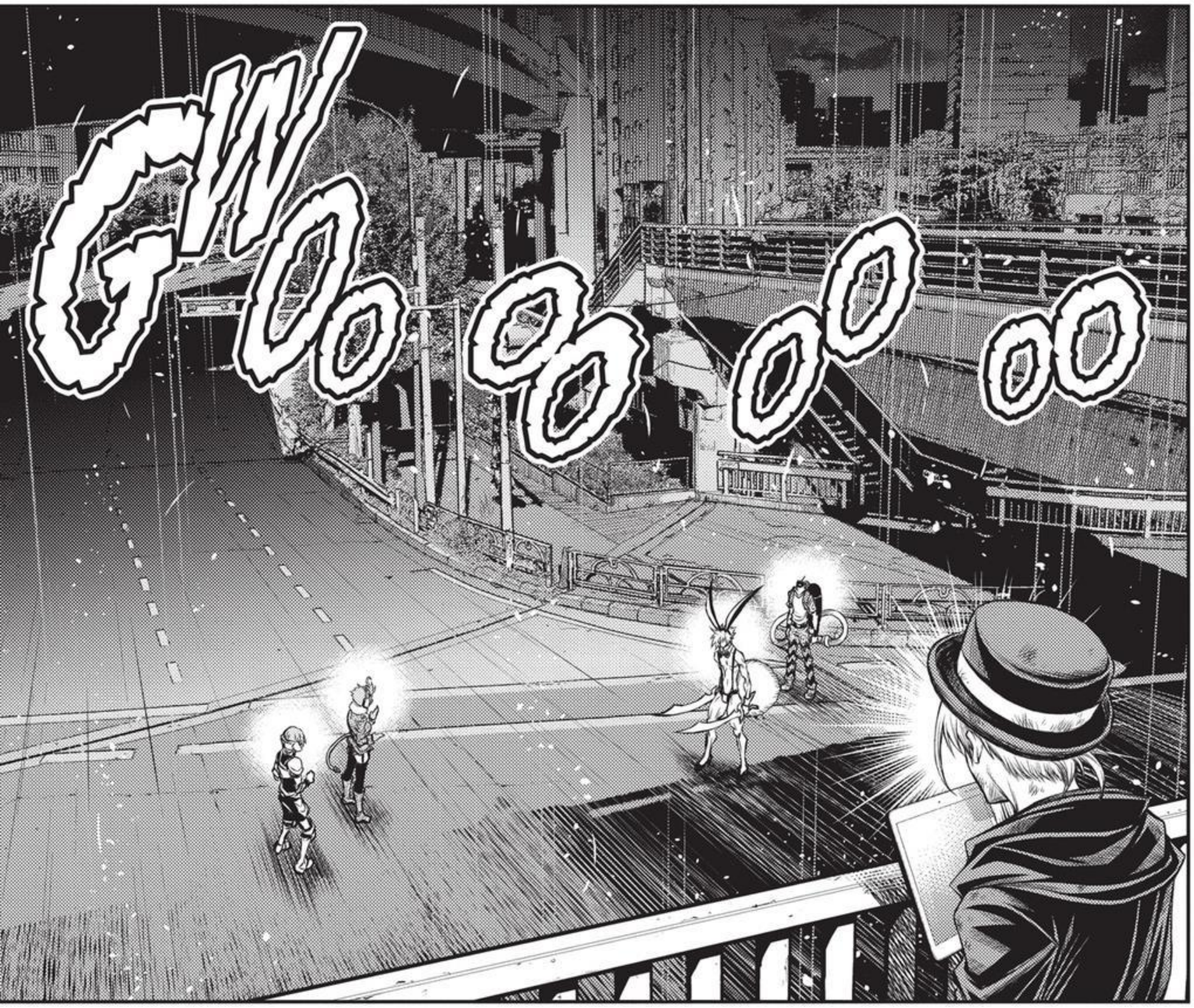
I AM THE FIGHTER OF THE *MONKEY.*

SHARYŪ *!!*

I KILL *INEXOR-ABLY.*

I AM THE FIGHTER OF THE *RAT.*

NEZUMI *!!*


GWOOOOOO


THE FIRST TAG-TEAM BATTLE— IF THAT'S WHAT YOU CAN CALL IT.
NOW ...
HOW WILL IT END?

Standing beside
Snake was the man with
the freakish expression and
the freakish attire—Rabbit.
Of the two, the corpse—
the headless corpse, at that—
was the less disturbing.

"NEZUMI!"

"I KILL INEXORABLY!"

"SHARYŪ!"

"I KILL IN PEACE!"

GW OO OOO OO

OO OO

CHAPTER NINE

RAT, RABBIT, SNAKE, MONKEY

"USAGI!"

"I KILL WITH DISTINCTION!"

ドン

!!

SHOR

WHAT?! SNAKE'S CORPSE MOVED FIRST?

...

WHAT? YOU'RE FIGHTING NOW?

NEZUMI.

CAN I LEAVE *SNAKE* TO YOU?

SHAF

I'M A PACIFIST, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WON'T DEFEND MYSELF.

I'LL MAKE HIM UNDER-STAND.

GRIP

I'LL RESTRAIN HIM WITHOUT INJURING HIM.

TP TP TP TP TP TP

UGH...

YOU DO THIS *EVERY TIME.*

GRMBL

RESTRAIN HIM WITHOUT INJURING HIM?

THAT'S A LOT HARDER THAN JUST TAKING HIM DOWN, YOU KNOW.

HM?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "EVERY TIME"?

I MEAN ALWAYS. NO MATTER WHAT, THIS HAPPENS.

ALL RIGHT. I'LL HANDLE HIM.

GLA

NCE

AND BUY ME ENOUGH TIME...

HE DOESN'T HAVE TO WIN...

GOOD. EVEN IF HE'S ONLY A KID—A WARRIOR IS A WARRIOR.

...TO IN-CAPACITATE RABBIT.

...HE JUST NEEDS TO DRAW OUT THE FIGHT.

...

...

IT LOOKS LIKE...

...SEEKING A ONE-ON-ONE BATTLE.

...I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE...

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH US.

YOU RAISED YOUR HAND BACK IN THAT HIGH-RISE, DIDN'T YOU?

IF YOU CAN FIND IT IN YOURSELF TO HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART, AND LISTEN TO ME, THEN—

YOU REMEMBER WHAT I SAID, RIGHT? I CAN SAVE ALL OF US.

RUMBL

RUMBL

...

HE'S NOT LISTENING TO WHAT I'M SAYING!

DUN

HE WAS WAITING FOR HIS UNDER-GROUND REINFORCE-MENTS.

GRIN

BRO

AAA

HEAR ME!

HEAR ME!

HEAR MY WISH!

FWAPP

USAGI, IS YOUR WISH—

...

YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE!

FWP

AGH!




BB
ZZZ
THE



DD

...ATTACKING THESE LITTLE CREA-TURES...

...STILL FEELS WRONG.

DEAD OR NOT...

HUFF!

HUFF!

HUFF!

!!

BINK

TO UPSET ME AND THROW ME OFF?

IS THAT WHY HE SENT THEM AFTER ME?

ZIG

ZAG

SKIP

HE'S GOING LOW!

WANT

DESIRE

CHECK

CHECK

WANT

TARGET

TARGET

DES

IT'S AS IF HE SEES ME AS NOTHING BUT A CONTAINER FOR THE JEWEL.

OH. HE WAS AIMING FOR MY STOMACH.

WOOF

WUFF

SHIP SHIP SHIP SHIP

...TO BE A GREAT SWORDS-MAN.

WELL, A NECROMAN-TICIST HAS LITTLE NEED...

BUT...

HIS SKILL ISN'T ON THAT SAME LEVEL.

HIS MIND-SET IS AS GRAVE A DANGER AS I'VE EVER SEEN.

...I WOULD TRULY BE IN DANGER...

...FACING SOMEONE OF OX'S CALIBER.

AFTER THE MENTAL DISTRESS CAUSED BY FIGHTING THOSE BIRDS...

SWORDS-MANSHIP ISN'T THE ONLY THING HE'S LACKING...

...IT'S CLEAR HE'S NO MASTER FIGHTER.

FROM HIS FOOTWORK AND HOW HE MOVES HIS BODY...

SLP

THWK

THWK

THWK

THWK

THWK

...IS TO IN-CAPACITATE HIM...

ALL I NEED...

RUN

THERE! HIS BACK IS TURNED!

SH

...AND CONVINCE HIM TO SEE MY WAY!!

NOW TO PIN HIM DOWN...

TF UNK





“If you’re trying to win
because you want your
wish granted, we’d be more
than happy to help you
make it come true. If we all
work together, no dream
will be beyond our reach.”

CHAPTER TEN

RABBIT, SNAKE, SHEEP, MONKEY

MUR

MUR

MUR

MUR

GW

W

AT LONG LAST, AFTER 70 YEARS OF CEASELESS WAR BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS...

...THE LEADERS HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT FOR AN ARMISTICE!

DUNNN

...

YEAAA

CHAPTER TEN

RABBIT, SNAKE, SHEEP, MONKEY

oooo!

HE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT ME FIRST. HE SIMPLY TURNED HIS WRISTS.

HOW COULD HE BE CAPABLE...

...OF SUCH A MASTER-FUL ATTACK?!

WHAT?!

HE WAS BARELY AVERAGE WITH THE SWORD.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

I SAW HOW HE FIGHTS.

FW

P

FWSH

KA KLINK

SH NK

WAS IT ALL AN ACT TO TRICK ME INTO BELIEVING ... ...THAT HE IS AN AMATEUR ?

NO.

THAT WAS NO ACT— I'M SURE OF IT!

THEN... HOW DID HE DO IT?



BUT IT WAS ONLY SNAKE'S **HEADLESS CORPSE** THAT WENT.

SWSH

I GET IT NOW... SNAKE DREW NEZUMI AWAY FROM OUR FIGHT.

SWSH

SWSH

ゴゴゴ

...MY FRIEND IS WATCHING YOU.

BE-CAUSE ...

I CAN SEE YOU.

A HEAD WITHOUT A BODY...

... SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO ANY-THING.

WITH EYES TO WATCH OVER HIS BACK...

...HE USED THE SEVERED HEAD TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE.

HE PUT HIS MINION'S HEAD TO WORK AS A SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.

BUT RABBIT FOUND A USE FOR IT.

REALLY, REALLY NICE.

IT'S NICE TO KNOW A FRIEND YOU CAN TRUST HAS YOUR BACK!!

IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. DON'T BE AFRAID. I'M ONLY TAKING YOUR LIFE.

BUT IN EXCHANGE, I WANT YOU TO BE *MY FRIEND* TOO.

YOU KNOW, FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW YOU...

PAT

...I LIKED YOU.

PAT

...ONE OF THE THREE TOP CONTENDERS, WAS ELIMINATED SO SOON.

TO THINK THAT THE GREAT HERO OF PEACE...

DEAD

EAD

DEA

SHE'S NOW RABBIT'S FRIEND.

HIS MINION.

SLASH

EXCEPT SHE WASN'T ELIMI-NATED.

GWOOO

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT— MONKEY LOST...

...NOT ONE PERSON THERE BELIEVED HE WAS BEING GENUINE.

WHEN HE RAISED HIS HAND AT THE START...

HE DID WANT TO BE HER FRIEND.

EXCEPT...

AND FOR THE MOST PART, HE WASN'T.

SQLRSH

SW

SQLRSH

SQLRSH

BL

OR

F

AND HE'LL SYSTEMATICALLY DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

...MEANS KILLING THEM AND CONTROL-LING THEIR BODIES.

OF COURSE, TO HIM, BE-FRIENDING PEOPLE...

THERE'S NO HUMANITY IN WHAT HE DOES.

HIS TACTICS ARE DEVOID OF ANY EMOTION.

IT'S AS IF HE'S WORKING OTHELLO PIECES ON A BOARD.

HE'S NOT LIKE A MACHINE THOUGH.

JUST PURE, COLD-BLOODED STRATEGY.

WHAT HE WANTS IS A HORDE OF COLD, OBEDIENT CORPSES.

AFTER ALL, RABBIT DOESN'T NEED LIVING FRIENDS.

...WHO KILLS IN PEACE.

SHARYŪ, THE FIGHTER OF THE MON-KEY...

...WHO KILLS WITH DISTINCTION.

USAGI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT ...

IS THERE ANYONE WHO CAN BEAT THEM?

ONE IS CRAZY STRONG, AND THE OTHER IS JUST CRAZY.

GWOOOO

BLINK

BLINK

GW

BORN ON AUGUST 8.

HE'S 140 CENTI-METERS TALL AND WEIGHS 40 KILO-GRAMS.

REAL NAME, SUMIHIKO TSUJIIE.

HITSUJII, THE FIGHTER OF THE SHEEP.

HE'S THE VICTOR OF THE NINTH ZODIAC WAR.

DUN

And now, Team Rabbit
had its newest member—
the shadow of a hero,
bereft of the pacifism more
precious to her than
her own life.

HE SPENT HIS YOUTH TRAVELING FROM BATTLEFIELD TO BATTLEFIELD...

THE FIGHTER OF THE SHEEP WAS ONCE AN ARMS DEALER.

...DISTINGUISHING HIMSELF AS AN EXCEPTIONAL FIGHTER.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TIGER, SHEEP









BAM BAM BAM

...CREATING MOUNTAINS OF CORPSES AND RIVERS OF BLOOD...

HE WIELDED ALL MANNER OF HEAVY WEAPONRY...

KRAM BRAM

BLAM

...AND KEPT ON FIGHTING.

...AND FOUGHT ...

...AS HE FOUGHT ...

HIS WISH WAS...



...TO SEE HIS NEWBORN GRAND-SON.

IN THE NINTH ZODIAC WAR, HE BLEW APART AN ENTIRE SPACE STATION...

...AND SECURED A MOST IMPRES-SIVE VICTORY.

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS.

TWELVE YEARS.

BIRTH.

I'M THE ONE WHO WAS CHOSEN TO REPRESENT OUR CLAN.

ARE YOU SERIOUS, GRANDPA?

AND THEN...

...YOU'D HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO VOLUNTEER YOURSELF AT YOUR AGE.

EVEN IF YOU WON THE ZODIAC WAR BEFORE...

HOW I WISH I COULD STOP GETTING OLDER.

AH...

YOU'RE NOT WRONG. AFTER ALL, YOUTH ITSELF IS STRENGTH.

MY AGE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ALL THAT MUCH OF A DISADVANTAGE.

BUT...

TH-THEN YOU WON'T—

...THEN IT STANDS TO REASON I ALSO POSSESS ADVANTAGES THEY LACK.

CLUNK

IF THE OTHERS POSSESS ADVANTAGES I LACK...

GR

IN

GW

SOME MORE THAN OTHERS. BUT I KNOW WHICH FIGHTER REPRESENTS WHICH HOUSE.

DO YOU KNOW EVERYONE YOU'LL BE FIGHTING?

I'VE LEARNED THAT MUCH, AT LEAST.

EXPERI-ENCE, FOR INSTANCE.

NO WARRIOR HAS SEEN AS MANY BATTLES AS I HAVE.

DOOM

LAB NO. 3

...THREE STAND OUT AS UNQUESTION-ABLY...

...THE TOP FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD.

FW

OF THE COM-PETITORS THIS TIME AROUND ...

THOUGH I ADMIT I'LL BE FACING A WIDE VARIETY OF OPPONENTS THIS TIME...

/P

WHO ARE THEY?

OX, THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER, IS, OF COURSE, AT THE TOP.

SECOND IS RABBIT, JUST IN TERMS OF SHEER DANGER.

AND THE PACIFIST MONKEY RANKS THIRD.

ONCE I OBSERVE MY OPPO-NENTS IN PERSON...

OF COURSE, ON THE DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT, I'LL ADJUST MY ANALYSIS AS NEEDED...

BUT I COULD NEVER IMAGINE THAT HERO...

IF NOT FOR HER PERSONALITY, SHE WOULD LIKELY CLAIM THE TOP SPOT.

...WOULD EVER BETRAY HER PACIFIST WAYS.

...THAT I'VE CULTIVATED OVER MY MANY YEARS.

...WITH MY DISCERNING EYE...

I WOULDN'T LAST TEN SECONDS AGAINST THE TOP THREE.

GR

I'M JUST SKIN AND BONES NOW.

IN

EVEN THE MOST CHARITABLE VIEW WOULD PUT ME AT TENTH OR BELOW.

AND WHERE DO YOU RANK?

I HAVE A SECRET WEAPON.

AH, BUT YOU SEE...

THEN YOU CAN'T DO THIS, GRANDPA.

FWOO

BEGINNING AS BLACK POWDER...

...EXPLOSIVES HAVE EVOLVED INTO MANY FORMS.

...AND THE HISTORY OF HUMANKIND ITSELF.

THE HISTORY OF EXPLOSIVES IS THE HISTORY OF WAR...

THE *SHŪKAIOKURI*— HIDEOUS BURIAL.

THIS IS MY FINEST CREATION—THE CULMINATION OF A LIFETIME AS AN ARMS DEALER AND A WARRIOR.

DU

NN

VVOOOO

IT'S A WORK OF ART.

KR

IT'S MORE THAN JUST A HAND GRENADE.

FF

BUT CREATING THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY WON'T BE EASY.

...THIS **OLD-TIMER** COULD ERADICATE EVEN THE GREAT **OX, RABBIT** AND **MONKEY** IN A SINGLE INSTANT.

GWOO

IF I USE IT RIGHT...

...I WOULD HAVE ENDED THIS BATTLE THEN AND THERE.

GRRR

GRRR

IF NO ONE HAD INTERFERED IN THAT HIGH-RISE...

GWOO

BUT WHO SHOULD I CHOOSE?

BUT NOW...

...I NEED A TEMPORARY ALLIANCE WITH ONE OF THE OTHERS.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ARE THE TWINS, **DRAGON** AND **SNAKE**.

HORSE AND **DOG** BOTH SEEM LIKE CLOSE-COMBAT TYPES— THEY'RE FIFTH AND SIXTH.

BOAR, OF THE PREVIOUS WINNING HOUSE, IS FOURTH.

AL-THOUGH ONE'S ALREADY DEAD.

IF I PULL THAT OFF, THEN EVEN A FEEBLE OLD FIGHTER LIKE ME...

...WILL HAVE A REAL SHOT AT WINNING.

SOMEONE I CAN USE AS BAIT TO DRAW OUT THE TOP THREE.

SOMEONE IN THE MIDDLING RANKS— THAT'S WHO I NEED TO CON INTO AN ALLIANCE.

...THAT LEAVES **RAT** AND **TIGER**, THE ONLY TWO WHO ARE CLEARLY WEAKER THAN ME.

WITH MYSELF AS TENTH...

AS FOR NINTH PLACE... I'D PUT **CHICKEN** IN THAT SLOT.

HOW CAN I CLOSE THE GAP THAT SEPARATES ME FROM THEM?

I NEED TO LOOK TO THOSE ABOVE ME, NOT BELOW.

ALONG WITH MY SECRET WEAPON, THE **HIDEOUS BURIAL.**

WITH MY EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE, THAT'S HOW.

IF I HAVE ANOTHER ADVANTAGE, IT'S THIS.

RUSTL

AND...

1st  OX

2nd  RABBIT

3rd  MONKEY

4th  BOAR

5th   DOG/ HORSE

7th   DRAGON/ SNAKE

9th  CHICKEN

10th  SHEEP

11th  RAT

12th  TIGER

I NEVER SWAL-LOWED.

THE POISON JEWEL...

MY DISCERN-ING EYE...

...PROVED USEFUL YET AGAIN.

THE MURKY-BLACK COLOR HAD A CERTAIN BEAUTY...

...BUT THE CUT DID NOT.

IF I HAD TO PICK THE ONE REASON I DIDN'T SWALLOW IT, IT'S BECAUSE OF THE WAY IT'S CUT.

TO SURVIVE IS TO AVOID TAKING RISKS.

TO LIVE IS TO BE CAUTIOUS.

...TO LIVE IS TO WIN.

AND...

I'LL USE IT AS A BARGAIN-ING CHIP.

SWP

SWP

I NEED TO PUT THIS ADVANTAGE TO WORK.

P

AND BECAUSE THEY DID...

THEY ALL SWALLOWED THEIR JEWELS.

I PAID CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE OTHER FIGHTERS.

...OR HOW UNCON-CERNED THEY MAY TRY TO APPEAR ...

...NO MATTER HOW CALM THEY MAY ACT...

...I'LL STRIKE.

WHERE A CRACK FORMS...

...AND WILL AFFECT THEM IN MIND AND BODY.

...THE POISON WILL BE WORKING AGAINST THEM...

...IT'LL BE WITH A GENTLE TOUCH.

WHEN I STRIKE ...

...AND ENABLE OBJECTS OF MY CHOOSING TO PASS THROUGH SOLID MATTER.

WITH MY SPECIAL POWER, I CAN MANIPULATE QUANTUM TUNNELS AT WILL...

DOOOOM

THAT IS, OF COURSE, A COMPLETE LIE.

BUT I KNOW HOW TO SELL A LIE.

SHOOT

pou pou

...THIS.

AND I CAN DO IT WITHOUT CAUSING YOU ANY HARM.

!!

WITH MY POWER, I CAN REMOVE THE POISON JEWEL FROM YOUR BODY.

AND THEN I'LL SAY...

FEW COULD RESIST SUCH A TEMPTING OFFER.

SMILE

THE SAFE EXTRACTION OF POISON FROM THEIR BODY...

...WE CAN BE ODDLY PERCEPTIVE OF DECEPTION AGAINST OTHERS.

Heh Heh Heh

IT'S HUMAN NATURE— EVEN WHEN WE CAN'T SEE WE'RE BEING DECEIVED...

TWO WOULD BE INVITING DANGER.

BUT I ONLY NEED TO DECEIVE ONE PERSON TO MY SIDE.

ASH

HH

HH

THE TIME SHOULD BE RIGHT FOR ME TO STIR THINGS UP.

IT'S BEEN THREE HOURS SINCE THE ZODIAC WAR BEGAN.

THAT COULD ONLY BE ONE THING...

ANOTHER FIGHTER.

A VOICE IN THE ABAN-DONED CITY.

VW

P

FWP

IF NEED BE, I'LL SETTLE FOR SOMEONE WEAKER THAN HIM.

TP TP TP TP

I HOPE IT'S DOG.



TIGER ?!

By not
panicking when told they
had just swallowed poison,
his opponents showed
themselves to be warriors—
but as far as Sheep was concerned,
a true warrior would never
swallow poison.

CHAPTER TWELVE

TIGER, SHEEP

UN

AS MUCH AS I NEED A PARTNER, I'M NOT SURE SHE'S THE ONE.

TIGER— THE FIGHTER I RANKED **DEAD LAST.**

Ah

hh!

BACK IN THE DAY, WE CALLED RAGING DRUNKARDS LIKE THAT "BIG TIGERS."

SHE LOOKS COMPLETELY DRUNK.

I KNOW YOU'RE THERE, OLD MAN.

QUIT YOUR PEEP-ING...

...AND GET YOUR ASS OUT INTO THE OPEN.

!!

...

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OLD TO PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK?

IF YOU WANT TO PLAY, I'LL PLAY WITH YOU, TIGER.

DID YOU SEE WHAT I DID THERE?

YEAH.

...

BUT I'M THE TIGER— GET IT? ♪

I CALLED YOU TIGER.

I DON'T KNOW IF SHE JUST HAP-PENED TO SEE ME...

...OR IF IT WAS ONLY A LUCKY GUESS.

SHE'S NOT JUST DRUNK, SHE'S HAMMERED.

...

SHE'S NO FIGHTER— SHE'S JUST A BUM.

BUT I DON'T SENSE A WARRIOR'S AURA ABOUT HER.

...AND ALCOHOL IS HER WAY OF ESCAPING REALITY.

MAYBE THE PRESSURE OF THIS FIGHT WAS MORE THAN SHE COULD HANDLE...

HMPH ...

ALL RIGHT, MISS, I'LL PLAY YOUR GAME.

T

P

...I'M SHOCKED SHE CAN STILL SPEAK.

WHATEVER THE CASE, AFTER EMPTYING THAT MANY SAKE BOTTLES...

...

OKAY, THEN.

WO BBL

...TO TURN DOWN A YOUNG LADY'S INVITATION.

GW

IT WOULD BE RUDE OF ME...

TO TR

TEETR

WHAAA ?

BM

FWUMP

P

GRRRR

GRR

ZZZW

P

ZWP

ZWP

DUN

YOU CAN MAKE THERE BE THREE OF YOU?

WHOA, YOUR MIRROR IMAGE TECHNIQUE IS *INCREDIBLE*, OLD MAN!

I DON'T CARE HOW EASY IT WOULD BE TO DECEIVE A FOOL LIKE THAT.

EVEN IF I COULD ALLY MYSELF WITH HER, I DON'T WANT TO.

WHAT A ***DISGRACE.***

...

I'D HOPED TO AVOID ANY DIRECT FIGHTING UNTIL THE END, BUT...

SHOULD I JUST ATTACK HER INSTEAD?

...WILL EASILY TAKE DOWN THE LIKES OF SOME BARELY CONSCIOUS DRUNK.

...MY CUSTOM-BUILT GRENADE— THE HIDEOUS BURIAL...

YOU THINK YOU'LL PUT ME TO SLEEP?

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, OLD MAN?

HEE

HEE

HEE

GRRRR ...

OH, I GET IT— ONE SHEEP, TWO SHEEP, HUH?

WAIT, WHEN DID THERE GET TO BE FOUR OF YOU?

WP

...WE SHOULD INTRODUCE OURSELVES ONCE YOU'RE A LITTLE LESS DRUNK.

...

PER-HAPS, YOUNG MISS...

JUST A LITTLE BIT DRUNK.

I'M NOT DRUNK, I'M NOT.

SHUT UP— I'M NOT DRUNK.

...AND I'LL STILL BE JUST FINE.

FWP

FWP

FWP

I CAN DRINK ALL THE SAKE I WANT...

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT EVERY DRUNK SAYS.

...

BU

RP

...I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SYMPATHY FOR HER TO FILL A SINGLE SAKE CUP.

IF THAT'S HOW IT IS...

I KILL WITH DRUNKEN POWER.

I AM *TORA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER.

THUD

WHA?!

AH!

AH!

SHE'S ON ALL FOURS. BY TAKING THAT STANCE...

...SHE CAN ONLY LEAD WITH ONE ATTACK— HER CLAWS.

I KILL WITH *DECEPTION.*

I AM *HITSUJII,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *SHEEP.*

APPARENTLY THIS TIGER DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME SENSE.

WOBBL

WOBBL

IT'S SAID THAT A SKILLED HAWK HIDES ITS TALONS.

IT'S INCREDIBLE SHE HASN'T BEEN KILLED YET.

...THEN SHE COULD BE STONE SOBER AND THE RESULT WOULD BE NEARLY THE SAME.

IF SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW THAT MUCH...

YAWN

!?

Gwiezdny Cyrk

WHAT WAS THAT, JUST NOW?

...

BUT ...

YAWN

NOTHING'S CHANGED ABOUT HER.

YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M GETTING TIRED OF THIS GAME.

ANOTHER SPLIT IMAGE, OLD MAN?

T

P

FWP

I'LL JUST CARVE THROUGH ALL OF 'EM.

OH WELL.

!!

HUH ?

WHAT ?

THAT'S ...

SHRIK!

CLAWS!

CLAWS!

CLAWS!

CLAWS!





TH

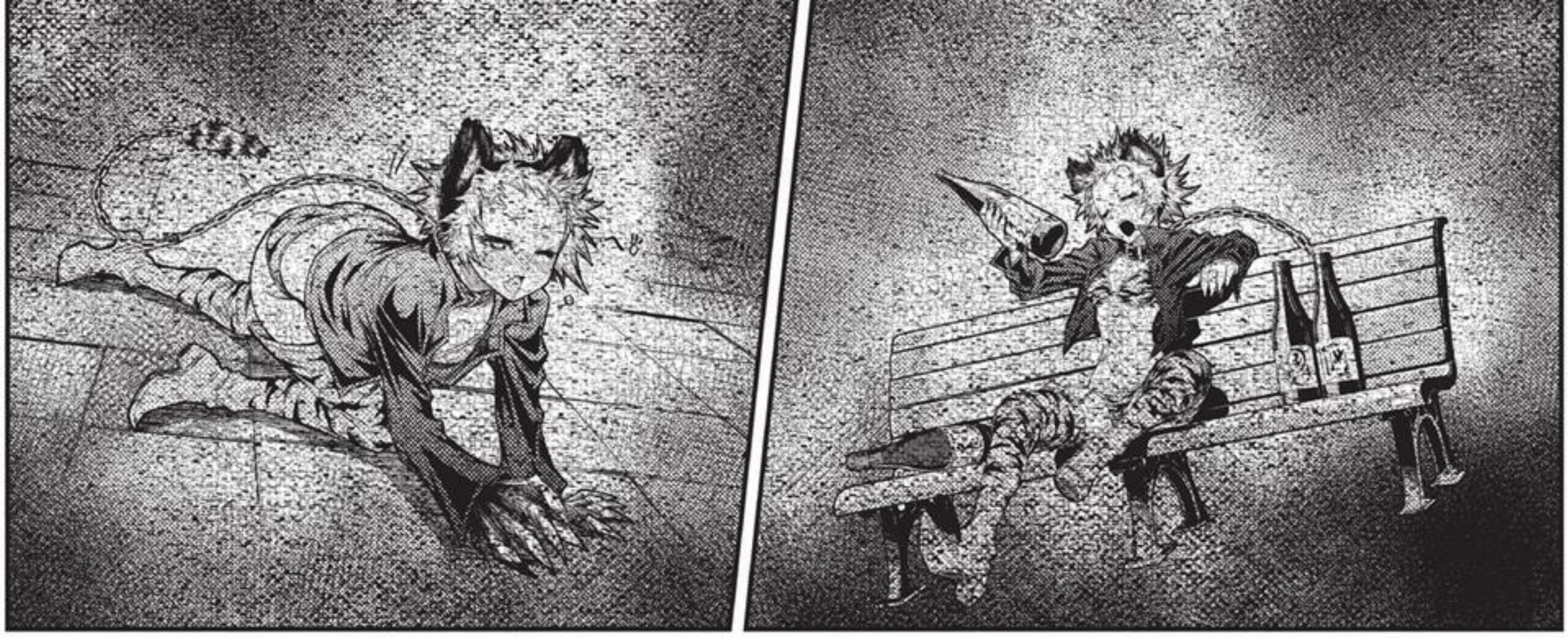
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WRU

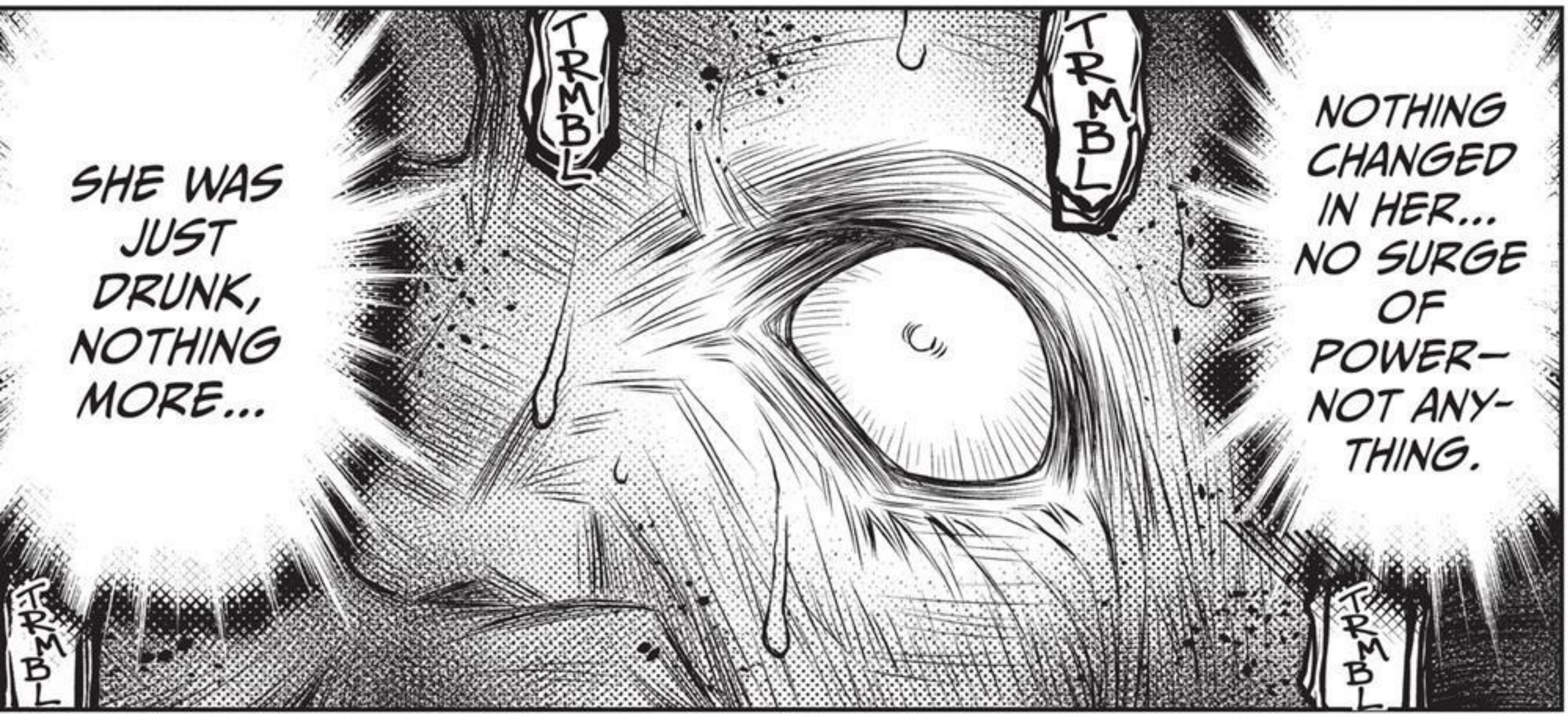
WRU

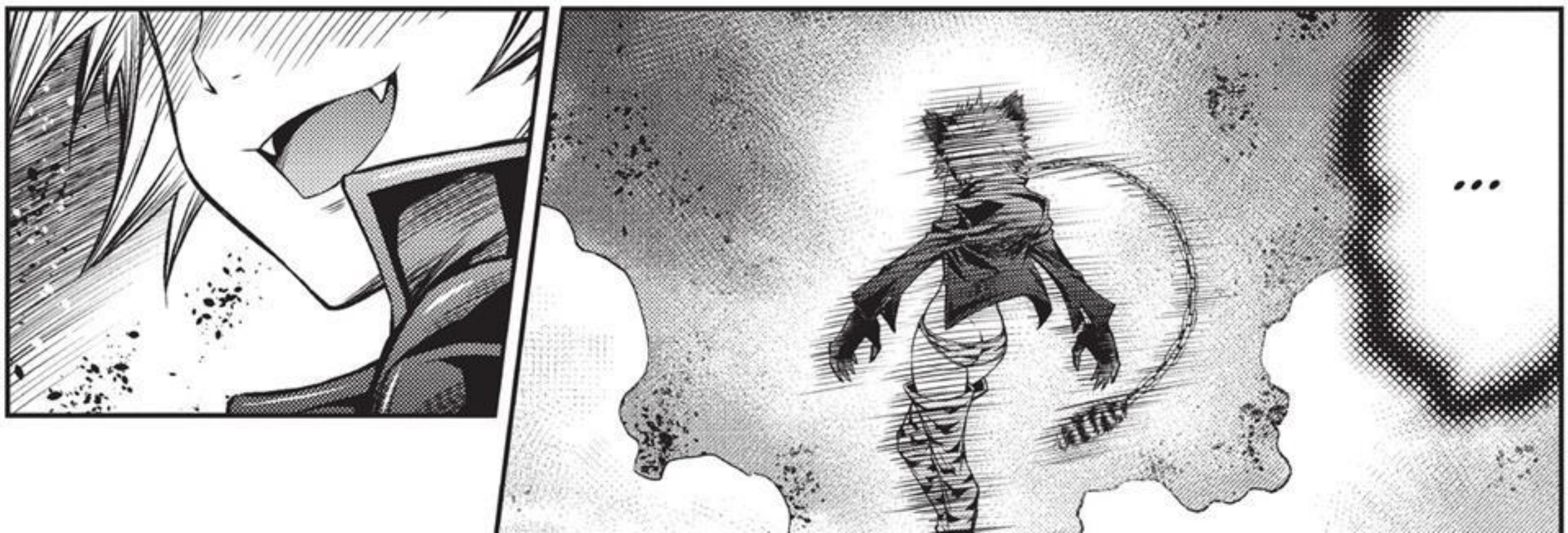
SHE ATTACKED... WITH...HER CLAWS.

I... WAS RIGHT.




SHOCK


TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL
SHE WAS JUST DRUNK, NOTHING MORE...
NOTHING CHANGED IN HER... NO SURGE OF POWER— NOT ANY-THING.


...

GOT IT?

WOBBL

THAT SAME OLD STANDBY— THE MORE I DRINK, THE *STRONGER* I GET.

WOBBL

WOBBL

THE *DRUNKEN FIST!*

YOU'VE HEARD OF IT, HAVEN'T YOU?

GRRRR...

FUNNY THING IS, OLD MAN, YOU FIT THE VISUAL BETTER THAN ME.

TH'

UMP

UW

MY EYES...

MY...

SHFT

...

"O"

IN MY CASE, HUMAN BLOOD ...

...GETS ME MUCH DRUNKER THAN SAKE.

AL-THOUGH ...

SLRP

WOO

BUT ONE LITTLE OLD MAN...

...WON'T BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY MY THIRST.

SKRT

SKRT

SKRT

RSTL

RSTL

RSTL

TWIP

...

YES.

THAT'S RIGHT.

...

...

WOOOO

TIGER IS ON THE MOVE.

JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR VOL. 2 (END)

HITSUJII,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE SHEEP

REAL NAME:
SUMIHIKO
TSUJIIE

HEIGHT:
140 CM
WEIGHT:
40 KG



"I wish for time."

"I wish for talent."



UUMA,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE HORSE

REAL NAME:
YOSHIMI SŌMA

HEIGHT:
230 CM
WEIGHT:
150 KG

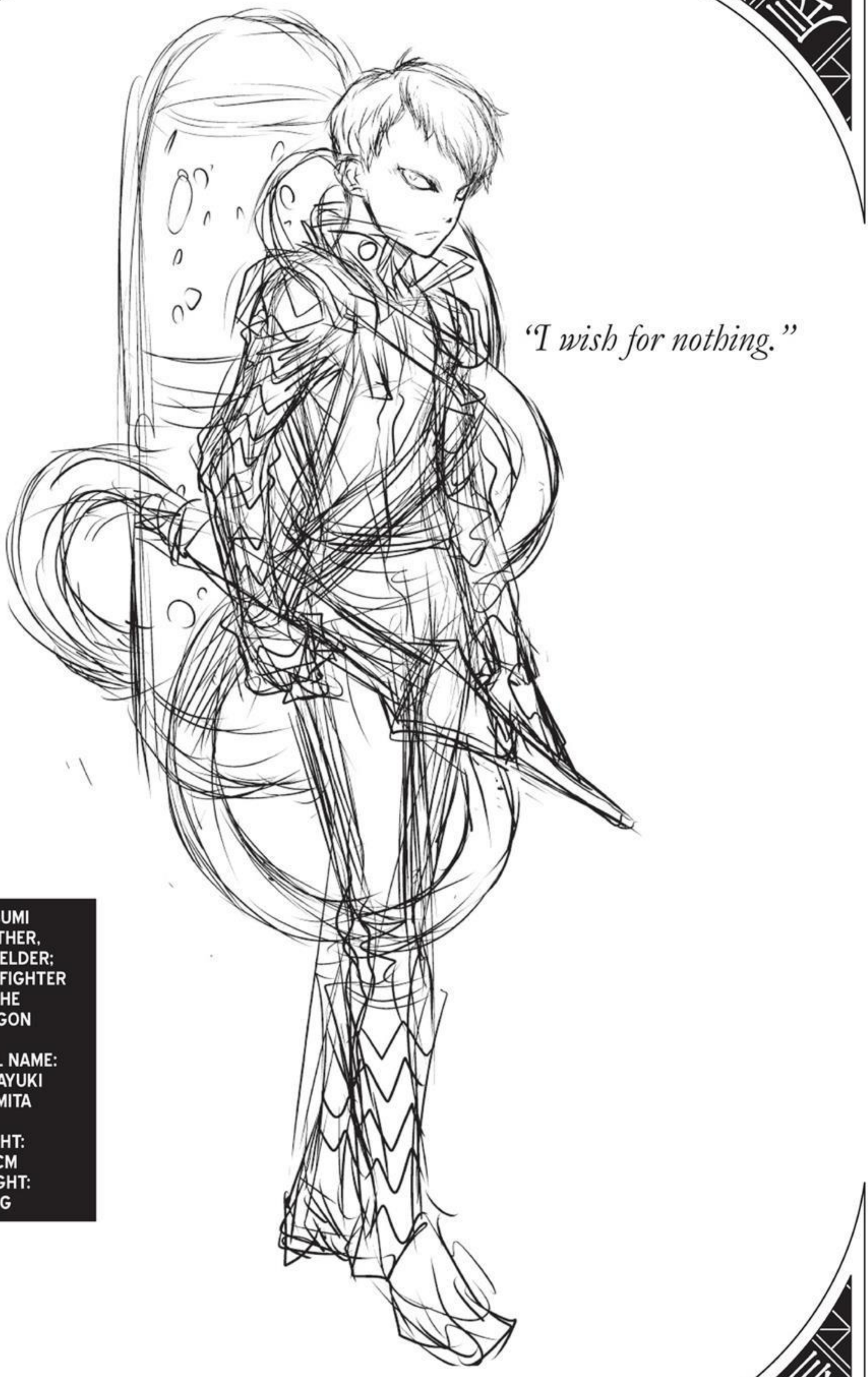


TATSUMI
BROTHER,
THE YOUNGER;
THE FIGHTER
OF THE SNAKE

REAL NAME:
TAKEYASU
TSUMITA

HEIGHT:
164 CM
WEIGHT:
58 KG

"I wish for money."



"I wish for nothing."

TATSUMI
BROTHER,
THE ELDER;
THE FIGHTER
OF THE
DRAGON

REAL NAME:
NAGAYUKI
TSUMITA

HEIGHT:
164 CM
WEIGHT:
58 KG

With *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* originating as a novel and being adapted into an anime and a manga, this project has been a real learning experience—and a fun one at that—about storytelling across different forms of media.

For a while, I've thought that certain media are best consumed in analog form and others in digital. I wonder if this manga qualifies as a proof of concept.

Whatever the case, I just wish I had more time to read print media, and more time to watch movies.

—Akira Akatsuki

AKIRA AKATSUKI

Born 1977, Akira Akatsuki made his manga debut in 2003 with *Z-XL Dai* in *Akamaru Jump*. He later published a number of one shots, such as *Angel Agent*, *Contractor M&Y* and *Little Brave Pukateriosu*, in *Jump the Revolution!*, *Weekly Shonen Jump* and *Akamaru Jump*, respectively. His most notable work and first major collaboration with NISIOISIN, *Medaka Box*, premiered in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 2009 and concluded in 2013. He published two more one shots, *Toshokan Kyuuseishu Kurabu* (*Library Savior Club*) and *Musume Iri-Hako* (*The Girl in the Box*), the latter of which was another collaboration with NISIOISIN, before starting work on *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* in 2017 on *Jump+*.

NISIOISIN

Born 1981. In 2002, NISIOISIN's novel *The Beheading Cycle* won the 23rd Mephisto Prize and became his debut publication. Among his numerous novels are the *Zaregoto* series, the *Monogatari* series, the *Densetsu* series, and the *Bōkyaku Tantei* series. He also wrote the manga tie-in novel *Death Note: Another Note*. As a manga writer, he has appeared in the *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine with his series *Medaka Box* and his *Ōgiri* series of one-shot manga stories have seen the pages of *Weekly Shonen Jump*, *Jump SQ*, *Weekly Young Jump* and *Bessatsu Margaret*.

HIKARU NAKAMURA

Born 1984. Illustrator Hikaru Nakamura made her debut in 2001 with her manga *Kairi no Sue* in the *Monthly Gangan Wing* magazine. Her other works include *Arakawa Under the Bridge*, published in *Young Gangan*, and 2009 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize winner *Saint Young Men*, published in *Monthly Morning Two*. She previously collaborated with NISIOISIN for his *Ōgiri* series with "The One Wish I Really Want to Come True, and the Ninety-Nine Others I Don't So Much."

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

2

SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

TRANSLATION
Nathan A. Collins

LETTERING
Mark McMurray

RETOUCH
James Gaubatz

DESIGN
Alice Lewis

EDITOR
Marlene First

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JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence and adult themes.

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3

JUNI TAISEN
ZODIAC WAR

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
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JUNI TAISEN

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BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
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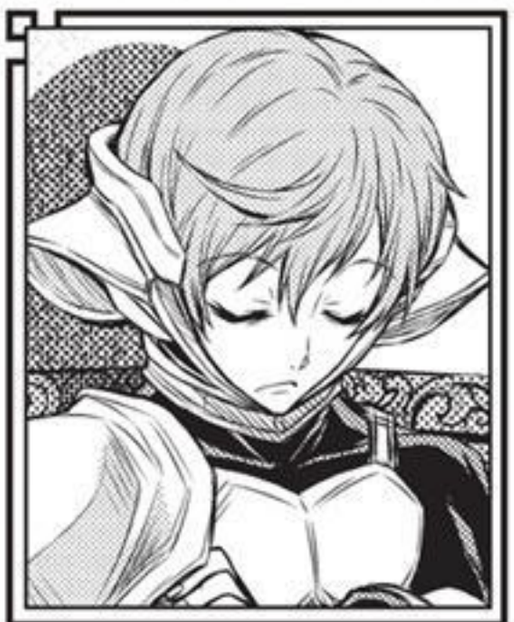
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

3



The Fighter of the Tiger
TORA

Kills with Drunken Power



The Fighter of the Rat
NEZUMI

Kills Inexorably



The Fighter of the Rabbit
USAGI

Kills with Distinction
• *Necromanticist*



The Fighter of the Ox
USHII

Just Kills

JUNI TAISEN
ZODIAC WAR
THE TWELVE FIGHTERS

1

The Zodiac War is held every twelve years.

2

Twelve fierce warriors take on the names of the Zodiac.

3

The sole victor will be granted any single wish.

4

The twelve warriors each possess unique superpowers.





The Fighter of the Dog
DOTSUKU

Kills with Bites
- *Michio Tsukui*
- *Mad Dog's Vise*



The Fighter of the Monkey
SHARYŪ

Kills in Peace
- *Misaki Yūki*
- *Senjutsu*



The Fighter of the Horse
UUMA

Kills in Silence



The Fighter of the Dragon
TATSUMI BROTHER,
the Elder

Kills for Money



The Fighter of the Boar
INŌNOSHISHI

Kills in Abundance
- *Toshiko Inō*
- *Making It Rain*



The Fighter of the Chicken
NIWATORI

Kills by Pecks
- *Ryōka Niwa*
- *Eye of the Cormorant*



The Fighter of the Sheep
HITSUJII

Kills with Deception
- *Sumihiko Tsujiie*
- *Hand Grenade: Hideous Burial*



The Fighter of the Snake
TATSUMI BROTHER,
the Younger

Kills for Money

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 13	Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Horse	005
CHAPTER 14	Rat, Snake, Horse	027
CHAPTER 15	Tiger, Snake, Horse	047
CHAPTER 16	Ox, Tiger, Snake	067
CHAPTER 17	Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Monkey	087
CHAPTER 18	Ox, Tiger, Dragon, Snake	107
CHAPTER 19	Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Monkey	127
CHAPTER 20	Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Monkey	147
CHAPTER 21	Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Monkey	167

HALF OF THE FIGHTERS HAVE FALLEN.

01:12
DOG,
DEAD.

00:00
SNAKE,
DEAD.

FOUR HOURS AFTER THE ZODIAC WAR BEGAN.

02:32
CHICKEN,
DEAD.

03:04
MONKEY,
DEAD.

03:48
SHEEP,
DEAD.

00:07
BOAR,
DEAD.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RAT, OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, HORSE

THAT'S RIGHT.

THE FIGHTER RANKINGS FOR THE FINAL ROUND OF BETTING.

THEY'RE HERE!

BEEP

#1: OX

THIS IS A WAR BY PROXY.

#2: RABBIT

THE FATES OF ENTIRE NATIONS ARE REDUCED TO MERE GAMBLING CHIPS FOR THE ULTRA-ELITE.

#3: TIGER

#4: HORSE

#6: RAT

#5: DRAGON

HIS STRENGTH IS *INCOMPREHENSIBLE.*

NO SURPRISE THERE. HE'S CALLED THE *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER* FOR GOOD REASON...

SO, *OX* IS IN THE LEAD.

...NOW THAT HIS *NECROMANTICIST* POWERS HAVE MADE MONKEY HIS MINION.

RABBIT IS IN SECOND ...

THE LAST TWO ARE WHERE THEY ARE BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T SHOWN ANY INTEREST IN FIGHTING.

THEN *HORSE*, AND THEN *DRAGON* AND *RAT*.

TIGER TAKES THIRD, FAR ABOVE HER INITIAL RANKING.

LIKELY BECAUSE OF HER OVER-WHELMING VICTORY AGAINST *SHEEP*.

THE MIDDLE OF THE PACK— HOME OF THE UNREMARK-ABLE.

BUT WHAT CAUSED *HORSE* TO DROP DOWN TO FOURTH?

UUMA, THE FIGHTER OF THE HORSE.

IN HIS TEENS, HE WAS TALL BUT SKINNY.

HE'S 230 CM TALL AND WEIGHS 150 KG.

REAL NAME, YOSHIMI SŌMA.

...HE FACED A TERRIBLE DEFEAT IN BATTLE.

OOOO

THEN ONE DAY...

EVERY EFFORT WENT INTO BUILDING HIS MUSCLES.

TRMBL

TRMBL

TRMBL

HE BECAME DETERMINED TO MAKE HIS BODY STRONGER.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

KHG

THE RESULT— THE MOST PHYSICALLY MASSIVE MAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE SŌMA CLAN.

WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT, HE EVEN TURNED TO DRUGS TO ALTER HIS BODY'S CHEMISTRY.

FUSH

FUSH

FUSH

BUT EVEN MORE NOTEWORTHY IS HIS DEFENSE.

THD THD THD

THWAP

HIS POWERFUL MUSCLES CAN DELIVER INCREDIBLE DAMAGE.

THROUGH HIS SPECIAL ABILITY— STIRRUP...

...HE HAS INCREASED THE TOUGHNESS OF HIS BODY BEYOND NORMAL HUMAN LIMITS.

HIMAWARI UNDERGROUND SHOPPING MALL

GN

BUT SOME-THING HAPPENED 90 MINUTES AGO...

OU

AND HORSE.

OX.

THAT'S...

...

MAYBE WE CAN STILL TEAM UP.

BESIDES, WE BOTH SUPPORTED MONKEY'S PEACE PLAN AT THE START.

I HAVE LITTLE TO GAIN BY FIGHTING HIM HERE.

THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER...

...WE WOULD HAVE A COMMANDING ADVANTAGE. WE COULD SHAPE THIS WAR AS WE WISH.

G

P

UL

WITH HIS SWORD AND MY ARMOR COMBINED...

I KILL IN *SILENCE.*

I AM *UUMA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *HORSE.*

I JUST *KILL.*

I AM *USHII*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX.*

WHAT ?!

FWAWT

!!

SWISH

HE SCRATCHED ME?

...

!!

HE'S NOT THIRSTY TO KILL LIKE THE OTHERS.

WASN'T HE WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER?

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

W-WHY IS HE DOING THIS?

WSH

THE SITUATION'S CHANGED.

I'M SORRY I HAVE TO DO THIS.

WHAT ?

A NECRO- WHAT?

WHAT IS HE SAY- ING?

...IS A NECRO- MANTICIST.

ONE OF THE FIGHTERS ...

!!

AS SOON AS I SAW HER, I MADE UP MY MIND.

IT WAS AN UGLY SIGHT— HER GUTS HANGING OUT, HER FACE ASHEN. SHE WAS A *WALKING CORPSE.*

I WATCHED HER FROM A DISTANCE.

I RAN INTO BOAR'S CORPSE EARLIER.

...WITH MY OWN HANDS.

I NEED TO KILL AS MANY OF US AS I CAN...

I JUST KILL!

Wp

IF SOMEONE AIMS TO DEFILE US IN DEATH, THEN I CHOOSE A DIFFERENT WAY.

SHINK

AGH!!

AH!!

SHU

!!

GRAAAH!

MY...

MY STIRRUP CAN'T STOP HIM.

SKK

SKK

SKU

UGH!

!!

FW

I...

I CAN'T DO THIS!

SH

WURL

SHP

KP

AKK

...I'D LET YOU ESCAPE?

DID YOU REALLY THINK...

HMPH
...

...

FSSSH

I CAN'T BELIEVE MY STIRRUP ARMOR COULDN'T HOLD.

I...

TM TM TM TM TM TM

I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL THAT WAY AGAIN!

NO.

DEFEAT-ED...

...AGAIN ?

I'M GOING TO LOSE ...

I'M GOING TO LOSE ?

TP TP TP TP TP

!!

HE...

...WENT INSIDE A BANK?

KANARI KATAI BANK


GLO
O
WHR
P
P
P
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

WHAT'S HE THINK-ING?

HE'S SHUT HIMSELF IN THERE FOR OVER AN HOUR NOW.

HE'S NOT COMING OUT.

...

...PUTTING HIMSELF IN A BANK VAULT IS LIKE PROTECTING A STEEL STATUE WITH A PLASTIC CASE.

WITH THAT ARMORED DEFENSE OF HIS...

...WHEN THE TIME LIMIT COMES, ALL OF THEM WILL DIE FROM THEIR POISON.

IF EVEN ONE PERSON ESCAPES FROM THE BATTLE ...

*WINNING THIS ZODIAC WAR REQUIRES COLLECTING **EVERYONE'S** POISON JEWELS.*

...THAT HE'S COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN FROM THE FIGHT?

HAS HIS SPIRIT BEEN BROKEN SO BADLY...

WILL THE POISON NOT AFFECT HIM?

*OR DOES HIS RESILIENCE EXTEND **INSIDE** HIS BODY AS WELL?*

NO DAMAGE

UGH.

IF WE DON'T GET SOME LIGHT IN HERE, I'M GOING TO FALL ASLEEP.

HE'S RIGHT. IT IS DARK.

I FEEL AS IF I'VE BEEN SWALLOWED BY DARKNESS— BURIED IN THE ABYSS.

EXCEPT... THAT'S WRONG.

NO, THE MOMENT I CONSIDERED TEAMING UP WITH ANOTHER FIGHTER TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE...

...THAT'S WHEN I DIED AS A WARRIOR.

THE TRUTH IS... I DON'T KNOW IF MY STIRRUP WORKS INSIDE MY BODY...

BUT I DON'T CARE.

THE MOMENT MY ARMOR WAS PENETRATED, ANY CHANCE I HAD OF WINNING WAS GONE.


GL
OW
RAT
?
...

Before you read on,
perhaps you would
like to consider
the official odds
and try to predict
who will win.

If you have any
countries to wager,
the ultra-elite
will call all bets.

IT'S THAT KID, RAT.

THE ONE WHO SLEPT THROUGH THE START.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RAT, SNAKE, HORSE

WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

BUT...

?!

...IS THE SAME STUFF THE MILITARY USES.

MUR

THEY SAY THE GLASS ON THESE SMART-PHONES...

WURRR

YOU THINK IT'S TRUE?

I HEARD A GUY GOT SHOT WITH ONE IN HIS POCKET, AND THE PHONE STOPPED THE BULLET.

...

WHAT'S HE DOING?

WHY IS RAT SHOWING HIMSELF THERE?

WHAT IS HE GOING ON ABOUT?

...

THE GLASS GETS THESE RADIAL CRACKS, LIKE A SPIDERWEB. IT LOOKS KINDA BADASS.

YOU KNOW, WHEN I GET A NEW PHONE, I'M THE TYPE WHO CRACKS THE SCREEN ON PURPOSE.

THE BEST WAY IS TO NEVER REMOVE THE PROTECTIVE FILM.

GRIT

GRIT

GRIT

AND THAT'S CRAZY.

THIS KID...

BE-SIDES WHY HE'S THERE.

THERE'S ANOTHER QUES-TION...

...TO GET IN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

HOW DID HE MANAGE...

THE THING ABOUT RATS IS THAT THEY ALWAYS FIND THEIR WAY IN THROUGH EVEN THE SMALLEST CRACKS.

OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.

AFTER 'ALL, I MANAGED TO FORCE MY WAY INSIDE, DIDN'T I?

EVEN IF THIS IS A BANK VAULT, THERE COULD BE ANOTHER WAY-IN.

GLANCE

...OF BARRICADING MYSELF WITH EVERYTHING I COULD FIND.

BUT THAT'S WHY I WENT THROUGH THE TROUBLE...

WHY WOULD *RAT* CHOOSE TO FIND A WAY INSIDE?

BUT WHY THE BANK?

GWOOOO

!!

I KILL *INEXOR-ABLY.*

I AM *NEZUMI*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *RAT.*

I KILL IN *SILENCE.*

I AM *UUMA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *HORSE.*

?!

OKAY.

...

I'M NO "FIGHTER" ANYMORE.

AH. I RE-SPONDED OUT OF HABIT.

I DON'T EVEN DESERVE TO BE CALLED THE HEAD OF THE SŌMA CLAN.

NEITHER ONE IS ATTACK-ING.

WITH *HORSE'S* SPIRIT BROKEN AS IT IS...

...*RAT'S* APATHY MIGHT BE ALL THAT'S SAVING THAT GIANT'S LIFE.

DOES *RAT* NOT WANT TO FIGHT?

IF HE'S NOT HERE TO FIGHT ME...

...THEN WHY IS HE HERE?

OH, I'M JUST TAKING SHELTER.

THE *SNAKE* GUY IS CHASING ME, YOU SEE.

SNAKE ?

WASN'T HE ALREADY DEAD BEFORE THE START?

WELL, I SAY "SNAKE GUY," BUT HE'S REALLY A *CORPSE*.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

FW

OO

OW

SKCH

ZOO

!!

OOOOO

GRP

KRA

ASH

THRM

THRM

THRM

FW

OOM

FW

P

I TRY TO GET AWAY AND STILL HE ATTACKS.

DAMN IT.

!!

ATT

SOME-WHERE I CAN REST A LITTLE BIT.

SO, I THOUGHT I'D USE THIS PLACE LIKE A KIND OF PANIC ROOM.

WHAT IS THIS KID TALKING ABOUT?

...

YOU WERE ON BOARD WITH *MONKEY'S* PEACE PROPOSAL, WEREN'T YOU?

OH, I JUST REMEM-BERED...

WELL, HE *IS* SNAKE, RIGHT?

EVEN DEAD, HE'S AS TENACIOUS AS A SNAKE.

...

THAT ALL WENT UP IN SMOKE.

SINCE YOU'RE LETTING ME CRASH HERE, I'LL LET YOU KNOW...

WHAT GOOD IS ALL THAT TALK ABOUT PEACE WHEN YOU'RE DEAD?

HMPH.

SO THAT'S FINISHED NOW.

WHATEVER PLAN THAT PACIFIST WAS COOKING UP, SHE WAS THE CENTER OF IT.

MONKEY GOT HERSELF KILLED.

STOP THE FIGHTING, SO THAT EVERYONE CAN THINK OF A SOLUTION TOGETHER.

SOUNDS BELIEV-ABLE TO ME.

SHE SAID SHE HAD MORE THAN ONE PLAN...

...BUT I THINK SHE MIGHT HAVE JUST BEEN MAKING IT ALL UP.

SHE NEVER EVEN TOLD ANYONE WHAT HER PLAN WAS. NOW IT'S GONE WITH HER.

...

MONKEY IS DEAD ...?

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON OUTSIDE?

ONE OF THE TOP CONTEND-ERS WAS KILLED...

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE HER HOLLOW WORDS, RIGHT?

MTTR

A HERO WOULD STILL PULL A TRICK LIKE THAT FOR THE RIGHT CAUSE.

MTTR

MTTR

MTTR

MTTR

TRMBL

TRMBL

TRMBL

TRMBL

WHO KILLED HER?

WAS IT OX'S SABER?

TRMBL

TRMBL

...AND A FIGHTER WHO TALKS TO HIMSELF LOCKED IN A ROOM TOGETHER...

A FIGHTER WHO DOESN'T TALK...

HOW IMPORTANT IS PEACE ANYWAY?

I JUST DON'T GET IT.

JUST WHERE IS THIS GOING?

...DOESN'T MAKE FOR A GOOD CONVER-SATION.

IF EVERYONE STAYS ONLY ON THE DEFENSIVE, LIKE YOU'RE DOING, THEN THE WORLD WILL STOP CHANGING, WON'T IT?

AUDACITY AND MISCHIEF— THOSE ARE WHAT BRING CHANGE AND EVOLUTION.

JUST LIKE HOW YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD RIGHT NOW.

A WORLD THAT'S GONE STILL IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A WORLD THAT'S BEEN WIPED OUT.

...MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD?

I...

I...

I...

I...

...

COMPARED TO THAT, THOSE CORPSES UNDER THAT FREAKISH RABBIT'S CONTROL...

...SEEM MORE ALIVE.

BEING ALIVE WITHOUT TAKING ACTION IS THE SAME AS BEING DEAD.

BY THE WAY...

YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT *SHEEP* GEEZER IS, DO YOU?

SHEEP ?

WHY DOES THIS BOY...

...WANT TO KNOW WHERE HE IS?

I REMEMBER HIM, BUT THAT'S ALL.

HE MUST MEAN THAT OLD MAN WHO ASKED ABOUT USING EXPLOSIVES.

AH, YOU DON'T KNOW. THAT'S FINE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

WELL, I BETTER GET GOING.

HIDING AWAY IN A PLACE LIKE THIS WOULD BE TOO DEMORALIZING— LIKE BEING A HORSE WITH A BUSTED LEG, WAITING TO GET SHOT.

!!

!!

SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU.

BYE THEN.

ちゃぷ

BUT HOW?

GLANCE

GLANCE

HE'S GONE.

I THINK YOU SHOULD GET OUT OF THERE TOO.

THAT *SNAKE* GUY MIGHT COME HERE LOOKING FOR ME.

!! URK

OH, ONE MORE THING.

WOBBL

WOBBL

THRM

THRM

WOBBL

WOBBL

WOBBL

WOBBL

TMP

THRM

AT LEAST, YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING— ANYTHING.

THAT IS, IF YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.

IF YOU WANT TO KEEP ON LIVING.

DUN

The notion of withdrawing
from the battle was hard to
dismiss as merely foolish—
not when winning this
Zodiac War required
collecting the swallowed
poison jewels.

If just one participant
vacated the field of battle,
the rest would all die from
the poison.

Even the weakest fighter,
who might have little
chance at victory, possessed
the real potential to make
the rest die with him.

"...YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD RIGHT NOW."

"JUST LIKE HOW..."

"...IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A WORLD THAT'S BEEN WIPED OUT."

"A WORLD THAT'S GONE STILL..."

"...IS THE SAME AS BEING DEAD."

"BEING ALIVE WITHOUT TAKING ACTION..."

GWoooooo

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TIGER, SNAKE, HORSE

...

RST

THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT...

...REALLY SPEAKS HIS MIND...

...

THAT'S THE FIGHTER OF THE SNAKE.

WOBBL

WOBBL

WOBBL

IS RAT STILL INSIDE THE BANK?

AND HE'S COME FOR RAT.

HE CERTAINLY IS AS TENACIOUS AS A SNAKE.

...

RAT WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO SLIP INSIDE...

...BUT WHAT IS SNAKE GOING TO DO?

THAT BARRICADE IS STRONG.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

"THAT SNAKE GUY MIGHT COME HERE LOOKING FOR ME."

"I THINK YOU SHOULD ESCAPE TOO."

THAT KID TOLD ME TO ESCAPE.

BUT TO WHERE?

OX IS OUT THERE.

I'D BE IN EVEN GREATER DANGER OUTSIDE.

DOESN'T THAT MEAN I SHOULD STAY HERE...

...WHERE I'M SAFE...?

ALL I WANT IS SAFETY.

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS TO ME NOW.

"...YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD..."

"BEING ALIVE WITHOUT TAKING ACTION ..."

"A WORLD THAT'S GONE STILL..."

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

...

GRR

GRR

GRR

GRAAAAH!

KRMBL

KRMBL

KRMBL

KRMBL

BUT I CAN'T GET HIS WORDS OUT OF MY HEAD...

I DON'T NEED TO TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY.

THAT KID WAS JUST TRYING TO GET UNDER MY SKIN, THAT'S ALL.

STI-FLING ...

TO NO LONGER NEED TO FIGHT...

HUFF

TO TAKE SHELTER— TO WITH-DRAW, TO DO NOTHING...

OPPRES-SIVE...

HUFF

HUFF

I CAN HARDLY BREATHE.

SUFFO-CATING.

THIS SHOULD BE THE EASIEST THING IN THE WORLD. BUT INSTEAD, IT FEELS...

HUFF

I CAN HARDLY BREATHE ?!

A FIRE?

...

FWOOOOOM

BUT...

BUT THIS...

I UNDER-STAND THAT THE ENTRANCE IS BAR-RICADED ...

...

...AND THAT THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT MAY STILL BE INSIDE.

BLEH

THIS IS MAD-NESS!

MY ARMOR— MY STIRRUP— ISN'T SO EASILY DAMAGED, NOT EVEN BY FLAME.

BUT OXY-GEN!

I NEED OXYGEN TO LIVE!

AND SO DOES FIRE...

OOOO

THAT MEANS ...

I HAVE TO GET OUT!

I HAVE TO GET OUT!!

I HAVE TO GET OUT...

...BEFORE I RUN OUT OF AIR!

AH!

GYAH!

GYAK!

AAAA

KRIK

KRAK

RMBL

GWOOO

IN A WAY, HORSE GOT WHAT HE WANTED.

HE LEFT THE BATTLE WITHOUT HAVING TO FIGHT.

HE'S 164 CENTI-METERS TALL. AND WEIGHS 58 KILOGRAMS.

BORN ON OCTOBER 10 (PER FAMILY REGISTRY).

HIS REAL NAME IS TAKEYASU TSUMITA.

NOW, AS FOR SNAKE...

HE OPENLY ADMITTED THAT IF NOT FOR HIS MERCENARY WORK, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A SERIAL ARSONIST INSTEAD.

IN LIFE, FIRE WAS HIS WEAPON OF CHOICE.

FWP

HE WAS A MOST DANGER-OUS MAN.

BUT WHAT **REALLY** SETS HIM APART IS...

TP TP TP TP TP TP

EVEN IF HE CAN'T SEE OR HEAR...

...HE CAN STILL SENSE AND REACT TO HIS SURROUNDINGS WITH HIS UNIQUE ABILITY— **EARTH'S GUIDANCE.**

THROUGH HIS FEET, **SNAKE** CAN DETECT MINUTE VIBRATIONS IN THE GROUND.

I AM TATSUMI THE YOUNGER, THE FIGHTER OF THE *SNAKE.*

I AM TATSUMI THE ELDER, THE FIGHTER OF THE *DRAGON.*

I KILL FOR *MONEY.*

I KILL FOR *MONEY.*

TWO FIGHTERS AS ONE TEAM. SUCH TRUST IS INCREDIBLY RARE.

HE HAS A LONG HISTORY OF FIGHTING ALONGSIDE HIS BROTHER.

FWIP

WITH HIS PARTNER OUT OF THE RUNNING...

...WHAT IS DRAGON DOING NOW?

...WHAT HAPPENED TO DRAGON?

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS...

WOBBL

WOBBL

WOBBL

HE CLAIMED TWO JEWELS AT THE START.

THAT ARROGANCE SHOULD HAVE MADE HIM AN ENTICING TARGET.

GLANCE

IF **SNAKE** IS LEAVING, THAT MEANS **RAT** MUST HAVE ESCAPED.

HIS ONLY TARGET IS **RAT**.

SNAKE ISN'T AT ALL INTERESTED IN **HORSE'S** JEWEL.

THRM

COULD ANY FIGHTER STOP SUCH A RELENTLESS ARMY?

THE WALKING DEAD— DEVOTED TO NOTHING BUT CARRYING OUT THEIR MASTER'S COMMANDS.

!!

KRR

KK

FWOOOO

THAT'S ONE WAY TO SAY HELLO.

HEE HEE.

FWOOOO

WHAT'S HE DOING ?!

WHAT ...?

DU

BUT I PREFER THE BURN OF A GOOD BOTTLE OF SAKE MYSELF.

“I am Tatsumi the Elder,
the Fighter of the Dragon.
I kill for money.”

“I am Tatsumi the Younger,
the Fighter of the Snake.
I kill for money.”

The brothers would never again
stand shoulder to shoulder,
striking an intrepid pose to
announce themselves in unison.

HUH?

WAIT, WHAT?

GRRRRR ...

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

OX, TIGER, SNAKE

DID'YA LOSE IT SOME-WHERE?

WHAT'S WITH YOUR HEAD?

*WIELDER OF THE **DRUNKEN FIST**— SHE KILLED **SHEEP** WITH A SINGLE ATTACK.*

*THE FIGHTER OF THE **TIGER**.*

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

OX, TIGER, SNAKE

TATSUMI BROTHER, THE YOUNGER

TORA

DID SHE COME HERE IN SEARCH OF PREY?

SHE MUST HAVE SEEN THE GIANT COLUMN OF SMOKE RISING FROM THE BANK.

NAVI

!!

AND YOU ARE...

HM ?

HMMMM ?

YOU GOT KILLED BEFORE WE EVEN STARTED.

HA HA HA! ♪

YOU'RE THAT GUY WITH THE BADASS WEAPON STRAPPED TO YOUR BACK!

THAT'S IT! I REMEM-BER YOU!

THIS IS COMPLICATED. I'M NOT GOOD WITH COMPLICATED.

SW

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH YOU?

HEY! HEEEEEY!

KR

AK

SW

P

OOP!

HUP!

OW! THAT'S HOT!

...
RRR...

GRR...

...
RRR...

...
RRRR...

HEY, THIS ISN'T A CIRCUS.

I'M NOT JUMPING THROUGH FIRE FOR YOU.

HERE IT COMES!

I KILL WITH *DRUNKEN POWER.*

I AM *TORA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER.*

SCW

FWIP

FWIP

FWIP

?!

UP

DRUNKS NEED COLD SHOWERS, NOT HOT ONES.

DON'T YOU KNOW?

UH

AND SHE EVEN STOLE HIS FLAME-THROWER!

SUCH INCRED-IBLE SPEED.

THE

K

GRRR...

WELL, IT'S MINE NOW!

WHAT'S IN THIS ANYWAY? ALCOHOL, RIGHT?

HMPH

MY THROAT'S PARCHED ENOUGH AS IT IS WITHOUT YOU DRYING IT UP MORE.

HMPH

!!

NO WAY!

GULP

THAT'S NOT ALCOHOL !!

GULP

GULP

GULP

...ALL THE SAME TO HER?

IS ANYTHING THAT BURNS...

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

KLA KL

AN ZG

KRAKZ

OH YEAH.

THAT'S THE STUFF.

KRAKZ

KRAKZ

KRAKZ

KRAKZ

KRAKZ

SWP

WSSSSH

DU

DU

DU

NICE! VERY NICE!

HEE HEE

HEY, THAT'S SNAKE STYLE!

HEE HEE

WELL, HE IS SNAKE ...

SO THAT'S SNAKE STYLE, HUH?

SNAKE BOXING VERSUS DRUNKEN BOXING. THAT'S OLD-SCHOOL RIGHT THERE.

GRRR ?

A SHAME YOU'RE MISSING YOUR HEAD AND AN ARM, BUT WE CAN HAVE A GO AT IT ANYWAY...

GRRR... GRRRRRRR...

GRRR...

SOME DAMN CORPSE UNDER SOMEONE ELSE'S CONTROL!

?!

WHAT THE HELL?! IS THAT ALL YOU ARE— JUST A CORPSE?!

DOES SHE THINK SHE HAS A CHOICE? THE FIGHT'S ALREADY STARTED.

...

SO IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY BLOOD FOR ME, THEN WE'RE DONE HERE.

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT MY *DRUNKEN FIST*—IT WORKS BEST FUELED BY *BLOOD*, NOT *BOOZE*.

RIGOR MORTIS IS ALREADY SETTING IN, AND HIS BLOOD HAS COMPLETELY COAGU-LATED.

SHE'S NOT WRONG THOUGH...

IT'S TOO BAD. MY CLAWS ARE THIRSTY.

SHN

THAT'S IT. I'VE HAD ENOUGH. THIS IS STUPID.

SH

...THERE'S LITTLE TO GAIN IN FIGHTING SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE A JEWEL.

EVEN IF SHE'S ONLY MOTIVATED BY HER FIXATION ON GETTING DRUNK ON BLOOD...

ARGUABLY, SHE'S MAKING THE RIGHT MOVE.

...

...IT'S ANYONE'S GUESS IF SHE'S THOUGHT IT THROUGH THAT FAR.

ALTHOUGH AS DRUNK AS SHE IS...

FIND THE FIGHTER OF THE **RAT** AND KILL HIM.

HERE'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO.

THAT SHOULD BE ALL YOU NEED.

I CAN'T GIVE YOU BACK YOUR HEAD. BUT YOU HAVE— WHAT WAS THAT CALLED? **EARTH'S** GUIDANCE?

OH, AND YOU CAN KILL ANY OTHER FIGHTER WHO INTERFERES WITH YOU.

I'M SO HAPPY I HAVE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS!

OFF YOU GO THEN. THANKS, FRIEND.

FWOO

...

...INTER-FERES...

...FIGHTER WHO INTER-FERES...

KILL ANY OTHER FIGHTER WHO INTER-FERES...

...WHETHER OR NOT TO GO AFTER **TIGER?**

IS HE HAVING TROUBLE DECIDING...

WHAT'S GOING ON? **SNAKE'S** CORPSE STOPPED MOVING.

TR

MBL

...THAT SOMEONE MIGHT START FIGHTING HIS MINION...

I DOUBT HIS MASTER CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY ...

!!

KR

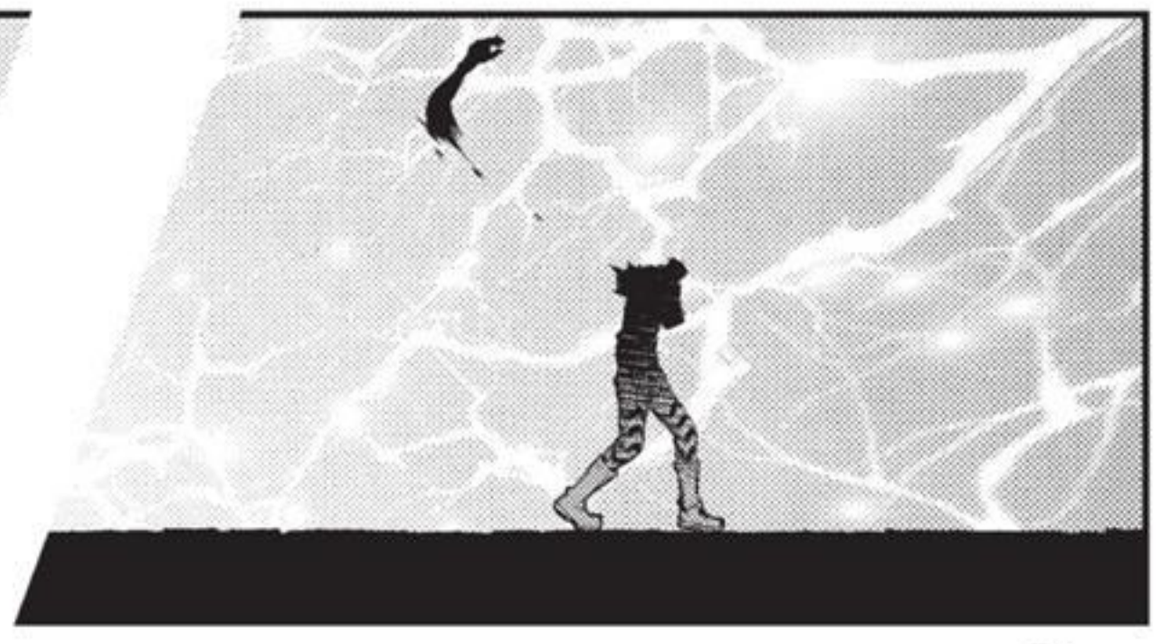
WO

...ONLY TO ABANDON THE FIGHT PARTWAY THROUGH.

I AM *USHII*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX*.

I JUST *KILL*.





!!

SKSHHH

TH

IT'S ...

IT'S THE *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER!*

UD

WRGL

WRGL

THERE'S NO NEED FOR US TO RUSH NOW, IS THERE?

NO.

PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT.

I'M TALKING TO YOU, FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER.*

DU

N

HM? YOU SEEM TO KNOW ME.

AND YOU'RE **OX,** RIGHT?

HAVE WE MET SOMEWHERE BEFORE?

TIGER ...

...

USHII.

THE *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER* ...

SHE'S ACTING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT NOW.

LET ME GUESS.

DID I KILL YOUR PARENTS?

IT SEEMS LIKE I'VE EARNED YOUR ENMITY SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY.

FLY

WRGL

WRGL

WRGL

Ox's masterful saber
slice hadn't made
the slightest noise,
but maybe Tiger had
heard the sound the
arm made when it
plopped to the ground—
or maybe the blood-drunk
beast caught the scent
of the blood-soaked
swordsman.

RMBL

RMBL

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

SW

P

SH

F

SHL

RP

GHWF

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

A WRITHING CORPSE, A DRUNK RETURNING TO THE FIGHT...

I'D SAY DISPOSING OF *SNAKE'S* CORPSE COMES FIRST.

ARE YOU SURE THIS CAN'T WAIT?

...SO THAT YOU'LL NEVER BE TURNED INTO A WRETCHED ZOMBIE LIKE *HIM*.

GRRRR

WORRY NOT—I PROMISE I'LL KILL YOU BY MY OWN HANDS...

I'VE NEVER SEEN A MORE BIZARRE STAND-OFF...

GIO

AND A SOLITARY MASTER SWORDS-MAN.

...AND ...

O

SHE MUST HAVE SOME SORT OF HISTORY WITH **OX**.

R R R R

SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO COME BACK.

WILL **OX** FIGHT **TIGER** BEFORE DEALING WITH **SNAKE'S** CORPSE?

THEY'RE BOTH SUPERIOR CLOSE-RANGE FIGHTERS ...

I AM *USHII*, THE FIGHT-ER OF THE *OX*.

I AM *TORA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER*.


ガッ!!
ガッ!!
ガッ!!

SNAKE'S SEVERED ARMS?!

THAT'S ...

...SNAKE IS STILL FIGHTING!

WOBBL

WOBBL

EVEN AFTER HE'S BEEN TORN TO PIECES...

GRRP

GRRP

GRRP

SQWEEZ

SQWEEZ

SQWEEZ

...I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH AUDA-CITY.

IN ALL MY TIME ...

GRRP

GRRP

URK... INTERRUPTING A FIGHTER'S INTRODUCTION LIKE THAT...

...THAT'S SOMETHING THAT JUST ISN'T DONE.

EVEN THE BIGGEST FOOL IN THE WORLD WOULD KNOW...

SQWEEZ

NEITHER... HAVE I.

...WAS AS STRONG AS THIS.

I DON'T EVEN THINK THE GIANT, HORSE ...

GR

RP

FOOL OR NOT, HE'S INCREDIBLY STRONG.

WE'RE WIRED WITH A SAFEGUARD THAT PREVENTS US FROM UNLEASHING OUR FULL STRENGTH. IN DEATH, HAS HIS LIMIT BEEN LIFTED?

I ONCE HEARD A THEORY ABOUT THE HUMAN MIND...

HIS GRIP IS SO STRONG HE'LL CRUSH THE BONES IN MY NECK FIRST.

KRK

FORGET STRAN-GLING ME...

KRRK

MY DRUNKEN FIST IS USE-LESS.

...I CAN HARDLY EVEN MOVE.

URK. WITH THESE FINGERS AROUND MY NECK...

THAT FREAK'S WRIGGLING BODY IS ALL THE WAY OVER THERE.

WRRGL

WRRGL

WHAT WOULD I DO ANYWAY? PUNCH HIM?

...KILL US.

THIS BASTARD MIGHT ACTUALLY ...

...

...ALONG WITH THE NECKS OF THE TWO FORMIDABLE FIGHTERS.

THE FINGERS CLAMP DOWN AS IF TO CRUSH ANY SUCH LINGERING QUESTIONS ...

WHERE DOES A LIFE BEGIN AND END?

WHERE DOES A PERSON BEGIN AND END?

GW

MY BROTHER IS CERTAINLY BEING PUT TO GOOD USE.

I HAVE TO ADMIT IT...

FWI

OOSH

GWOOOOOO



HIS REAL NAME IS NAGAYUKI TSUMITA.

TATSUMI BROTHER, THE ELDER— THE FIGHTER OF THE DRAGON.

BORN NOVEMBER 11 (PER FAMILY REGISTERY). HE'S 164 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 58 KILOGRAMS.

BUT SOMEHOW I DOUBT THOSE TWO WILL BE KILLED THIS EASILY.

SO THEN WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ME?

...AND NOW HE'S STRANGLING *OX* AND *TIGER* AT THE SAME TIME.

HE NEVER COULD HAVE PULLED THAT OFF WHEN HE WAS ALIVE.

SHIFT

SHIFT

KILLING **HORSE** WAS AN IMPRESSIVE FEAT...

SWAY

SWAY

WHRR

WHRR

DRAG-ONS LIVE IN THE SKIES ...

...ALWAYS THE WATCHERS AND NEVER THE WATCHED.

THE **DRAGON**— THE ONLY MYTHICAL CREATURE IN THE ZODIAC.

BUT THIS IS MY CHANCE TO ELIMINATE NOT ONLY TIGER, BUT **OX** TOO.

IF I DON'T ACT NOW, I MIGHT REGRET IT.

...TO REMAIN WATCHING FROM THE SKIES FOR AS LONG AS I COULD.

THE PLAN WAS TO USE MY ABILITY, **HEAVENS' HOLDING** ...

WOBBL

WOBBL

SWF

...

YOU KNOW, YOU CAN BE SO PATHETIC SOME-TIMES.

...

GWOOOOO

...I CAN'T BELIEVE HE HAS **OX** AND **TIGER** IN SUCH A BIND.

I KNOW THAT **SNAKES** CRUSH THEIR PREY IN ORDER TO SWALLOW THEM, BUT STILL...

...

SPLSHH

GR

AK

WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?

I DON'T REMEMBER... SAYING YOU COULD...TALK TO ME.

CAN...

CAN YOU STILL HEAR ME?

FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER*.

!!

...WHEN I ASK YOU... THIS FAVOR.

I WANT YOU TO KNOW... THAT I KNOW THAT...

...WHY YOU HATE ME.

I REAL-IZED...

TEAM PLAY IS...A FUNDAMENTAL PART...OF A BATTLE ROYALE, RIGHT?

I'M ONLY ASKING FOR A TEMPO-RARY ALLIANCE.

EASY NOW ...

...YOU SHUT THE HELL UP... BEFORE YOU KILL MY BUZZ.

GRRR

GRRRR

HOW ABOUT ...

...WE WILL FIGHT... IN THE MANNER AND CONDITIONS... OF YOUR CHOOSING.

THEN...

AS SOON AS... WE'RE OUT OF THIS SCRAPE...

I PROMISE YOU.

...

THIS IS *ME*...

...CHALLENG-ING *YOU*.

ALL RIGHT? YOU WON'T HAVE TO... CHALLENGE *ME*...TO A FIGHT.

...ME?

...IS CHALLENG-ING...

OX ...

...BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM CHALLENGING ANOTHER.

MANY HAVE CHALLENGED HIM TO A FIGHT...

OX—THE SOLITARY MASTER SWORD-SMAN.

...NO ONE HAS EVER FOUGHT HIM AND LIVED.

HE'S NOT ONLY TOO SKILLED TO HAVE ANY RIVAL...

ALL THE MORE SO WHEN PAIRED WITH A DEMAND FOR A DUEL.

FOR HIM TO SEEK AN ALLY WOULD BE SHOCKING ENOUGH.

SKWEEZ

SKWEEZ

SKWEEZ

...

ANY-THING!

YOU DON'T... HAVE TO DO...

SKWEEZ

SO... WHAT DO I DO?

A-ALL RIGHT. IF THAT'S HOW IT IS...

SKWEEZ

SKWEEZ

SKWEEZ

ALL YOU NEED... TO DO IS...

...KEEP THROW-ING UP.

W-WHAT THE HELL ARE—

SKR

R

R

R

!!

FWSH

WSH

WSH

FWOOOSH

SHOO

SHOO

Dragon possessed a
surprisingly calm nature,
along with the patience to
wait above the battlefield
for hours on end, and a
superior intellect which he
put to work analyzing his
brother's battle— or rather,
his brother's corpse's battle.

No matter how astonishing
his brother's efforts were,
Dragon had observed countless
battlefields in this manner,
and the experienced aficionado
of war was not simply gawking.

WARRIOR TWINS WHO FOUGHT WITHOUT HONOR.

BEFORE THE ZODIAC WAR, WE WERE KNOWN AS THE TATSUMI BROTHERS—

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

OX, TIGER, DRAGON, SNAKE

AS LONG AS THE PAY WAS GOOD, WE WOULD FIGHT FOR ANY COUNTRY, IN ANY WAR, LARGE OR SMALL.

WE DIDN'T ADHERE TO ANY WARRIOR'S CODE.

YEAH!

VR

R

HA!

M

WOO! ♪

M

M

M

VR

AK

RMMMBL

ANOTHER JOB DONE.

AND ANOTHER EASY WIN. RIGHT, BIG BRO?

YOU SAID IT, LITTLE BRO.

JUST LIKE THE LAST ONE WAS, AND JUST LIKE THE NEXT ONE WILL BE TOO.

BIG WAR, BIG PAY!

YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES.

CLATTER

WE GOT SUCH A HUGE HAUL, CONSIDERING WE DIDN'T BREAK A SWEAT.

MAYBE OUR BIGGEST EVER.

RATTLE

HAVE YOU HEARD?

PEOPLE ARE CALLING US "CHIVALROUS THIEVES"—ROBBING FROM THE RICH, GIVING TO THE POOR.

HAH, WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP.

HMM. MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE A BREAK FROM DONATING TO HOSPITALS.

WE COULD GO BACK TO ORPHANAGES.

WHAT SHOULD WE USE IT ON THIS TIME?

IT'S ALL POINTLESS. THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO FUN.

WE MAKE MONEY DOING BAD THINGS AND SPEND IT ON RIGHTEOUS PURPOSES. THAT DOESN'T MAKE US GOOD PEOPLE.

THAT'S NOT WHAT IT'S ABOUT AT ALL.

SO...

...ALL WE'RE DOING IS SHOWING THEM THE RIGHT WAY TO USE IT.

EVEN WHEN THE RICH ARE FORCED TO PAY HIGH TAXES, THAT MONEY ALWAYS ENDS UP USED FOR THEIR BENEFIT.

THAT'S WHY WE GET TO HAVE ALL THIS FUN.

IT'S ONLY CUZ THE WORLD IS FULL OF STUPID PEOPLE.

THAT'S RIGHT.

THMP

BTHMP

THEY'RE ALL STUPID. ALL OF THEM!

BWA HA HA!

VR M M M M

WE KILL FOR MONEY!

WE'RE THE *TATSUMI BROTHERS!*


FIN

I SAW THE EMPTY FUEL TANK...

AND SMELLED THAT STENCH OF ALCOHOL... ALL OVER YOU.

ALL IT NEEDED WAS...

...A SPARK TO IGNITE IT...

URK!

GRAH!

A-A-A-A-AH!

ROLL ROLL ROLL ROLL ROLL

SWOOSH

FWH

SHOOP

SQUEEZE

GRNCH

GRNCH

GRNCH

...

TWIST

TWIST

FWUMP

DROOP

TWIST

TWIST

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
WFT
WFT
WFT
BUT NOW HIS ARMS ARE STILL.
EVEN AFTER BEING CARVED TO PIECES, SNAKE'S REANIMATED BODY KEPT MOVING...
...WAS ALL HE NEEDED TO REST IN PEACE.
WFT
WFT
WFT
MAYBE CREMA-TION...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF


AAAA

WHAT DID YOU DO?!

YOU... YOU BAS- TARD.

PL

OP

HE HADN'T TURNED INTO ONE OF THOSE WALKING DEAD.

EVEN THOUGH SNAKE KILLED HIM...

BEFORE I CAME HERE, I FOUND HORSE'S CHARRED CORPSE.

GRRR

RR

...

I TOOK THE NECESSARY COURSE OF ACTION.

THERE'S NO CAUSE FOR YOU TO BE UPSET.

HM? THE WAY I SEE IT—

EXTREME HEAT DESTROYS BIOLOGICAL TISSUE ON A CELLULAR LEVEL.

THOSE ARMS WON'T BE MOVING ANYMORE.

TO PUT IT SIMPLY, I USED FIRE TO KILL SNAKE'S ARMS AGAIN.

YOU THINK I'LL LET YOU OFF LIKE YOU'RE SOME KID PLAYING WITH FIRE?

GRR

YOU'RE DEAD! YOU'RE DEAD! YOU'RE DEAD!

RRR

BUT...

NONE OF YOUR BURNS LOOK TOO BAD EITHER.

IF YOU'RE FEELING THAT LIVELY, THEN YOU MUST STILL BE UP FOR OUR FIGHT.

...ISN'T OVER YET.

RM RM RM RM RM

THE FIGHT WITH SNAKE...

HO

...MUST HAVE BEEN A FORMI-DABLE WARRIOR BEFORE HE DIED.

I'D SAY THAT THE FIGHTER OF THE **SNAKE**...

COME ON, HE ISN'T GOING TO KEEP ON FIGHTING US LIKE THAT... RIGHT?

HE WIELDS FIRE— THE NECROMAN-TICIST'S GREATEST THREAT.

AND ...

LOOKING AT THE WAY HE ATTACKED US, HIS BODY MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF SONAR-LIKE ABILITY.

THAT'S HOW HE'S MANAGED TO KEEP FIGHTING EVEN AFTER HIS BODY HAS BEEN CUT TO PIECES.

TO CONVERT HIS GREATEST RIVAL INTO AN ASSET?

IS THAT WHY RABBIT KILLED SNAKE BEFORE THE START?

...CAN I COUNT ON YOU TO WORK WITH ME?

BUT FOR NOW, UNTIL WE DEFEAT THIS THING...

AND I'LL LISTEN.

AFTER THIS, YOU AND I ARE GONNA TALK.

THE MORE WE TRY TO SLICE HIM APART, THE WORSE OFF WE'LL BE.

EVEN WITH HIM LIKE THIS, WE'RE STILL AT A DISADVAN-TAGE.

GRRRR...

...

BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING NEARBY THAT COULD BURN AN ENTIRE BODY.

IF THERE WERE A GAS STATION AROUND HERE, THINGS WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

FACING AN ENEMY THAT'S ALREADY DEAD... YET WE'RE ENTIRELY UNABLE TO ACT.

TWO WARRIORS, UNITED...

IT'S RIDICULOUS, REALLY—

YOU *CAN* ACT.

EXCEPT ...

THE BATTLE WOULD BE OVER JUST LIKE THAT.

IF THOSE TWO REALIZED IT, THEY COULD SIMPLY TURN THEIR BACKS AND FLEE.

KILLING RAT.

MY SORRY LITTLE BROTHER HAS ONLY ONE MISSION—

NOW *THAT* WOULD BE A SIGHT.

HEH HEH HEH.

THE GREAT PRODIGY, OX, TURNING TAIL FOR ONCE IN HIS LIFE—

WHAT BETTER TIME FOR A SURPRISE ATTACK THAN THIS?

BUT OX AND TIGER ARE WEAKENED AND INJURED.

I'D PLANNED ON WAITING LONGER BEFORE GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY.

THEN AGAIN ...

THIS MIGHT BE MY TIME TO ACT.

NOW WE'LL BE FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE AGAIN.

HEH. AND HERE I THOUGHT OUR DAYS AS A DUO WERE OVER.

I GUESS WE BROTHERS ...

...

...HAVE A BOND STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THAT'S WHY MY WISH WILL BE FOR NOTHING.

THERE'S NOTHING I WISH FOR...

...IN A WORLD WITHOUT YOU.

I WON'T USE MY WISH TO BRING YOU BACK TO LIFE.

BUT EVEN IF I WIN...

IT WOULD MAKE ME THE GOOD GUY.

IF I DID THAT, IT WOULD MAKE ME ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WE HATE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

...

IT'S MY JOB TO BE THE SUPER-HERO COMING TO YOUR RESCUE.

ANYWAY, I'M YOUR BIG BROTHER—

WON DONG

KEEP THEM DISTRACTED FOR ME.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU, LITTLE BRO.

I KILL FOR MONEY!

I AM *TATSUMI THE ELDER,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *DRAGON.*

I KILL FOR MONEY.

I AM TATSUMI THE YOUNGER, THE FIGHTER OF THE SNAKE.

I ALMOST THOUGHT I COULD HEAR HIM SPEAKING.

...

HEH HEH.

? ?

WHAT COULD HAVE FALLEN DOWN FROM EVEN HIGHER THAN HERE?

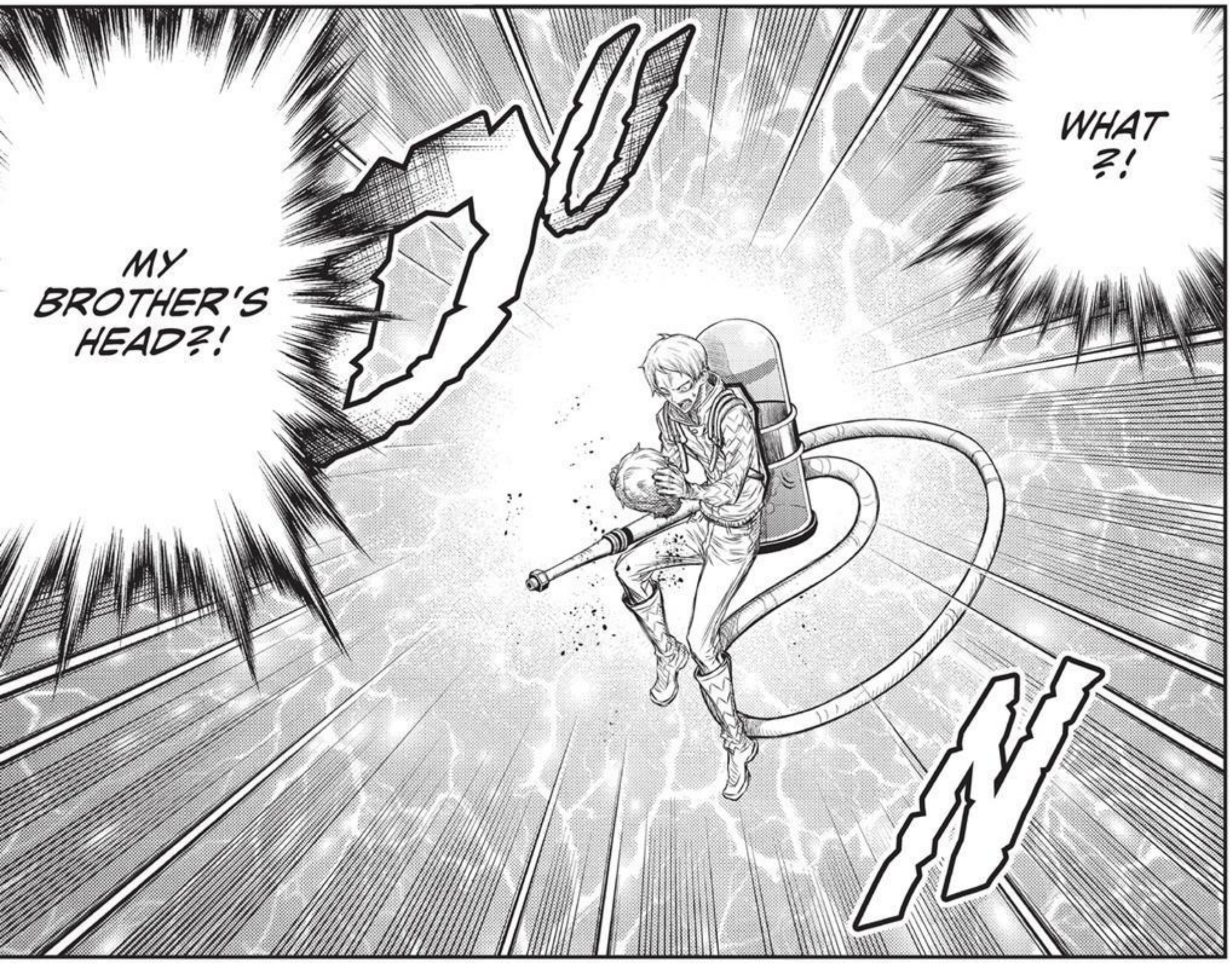
FWEE

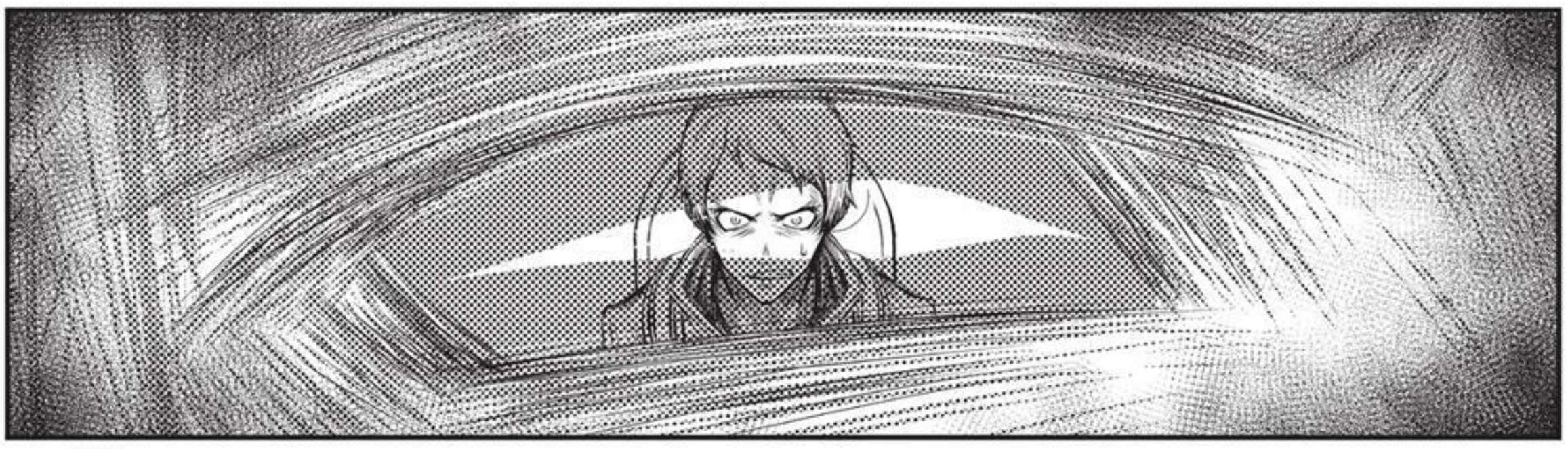
DON'T WORRY, MY BROTHER. I'LL HOLD A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR YOU. THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN—

PLOP






MY BROTHER'S HEAD?!
WHAT?!
N



Earth's Guidance,
if used properly,
could have given Snake the
understanding of everything
that happened in the abandoned
city, whether outside, inside
or underground.

Such an awareness
would have provided
him an incredible advantage.
Perhaps Rabbit had understood
this and decided to eliminate and
convert this formidable rival
to his side at an early—
too early—moment.

DU

MY—

MY BROTH-ER'S HEAD ?!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

WHO DID THIS ...?

AND WHY ?

THIS DIDN'T JUST FALL FROM ABOVE—

I'VE HEARD OF FROGS RAINING FROM THE SKY, BUT NEVER HUMAN HEADS.

IT WAS THROWN FROM BELOW!

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER.

GWOOOO

HE LAUNCHED IT INTO THE AIR TO LOCATE THE OTHER FIGHTERS!

RABBIT— THE NECROMANTICIST!

USING MY BROTHER'S HEAD LIKE A SURVEILLANCE DRONE.

IS NOTHING TOO EXTREME FOR HIM?

AS LONG AS I STAY UP HERE, I'M FAR OUT OF ANYONE'S REACH.

I NEED TO REMAIN CALM. RABBIT KNOWS WHERE I AM, BUT THAT'S ALL.

KRE

KRE

KRA

...

AH

IT'S SO COOL THAT YOU CAN FLY LIKE THAT.

HAH! DARN RIGHT IT IS!

BUT I'M KINDA JEALOUS OF YOUR POWER TOO...

*SIGN: DRAGON

I JUST DON'T GET IT.

I DON'T SEE HOW THAT BLOG OF YOURS ABOUT RAISING REPTILES COULD BE SO POPULAR.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, BIG BROTHER?

REPTILES ARE SUPER POPULAR NOW— IF YOU'RE IN THE KNOW, THAT IS.

SHUT UP!

THAT'S WHAT MAKES YUKI-ONNA SO CHARMING!

ISN'T THAT ICE-THROWER OF YOURS A LOT HARDER TO USE THAN MY HITOKAGE?

I'VE NEVER SAID ANYTHING, BIG BRO, BUT—

IT'S GONNA COME DOWN TO YOU AND ME. I WONDER WHICH OF US WILL BE THE SURVIVOR?

YEAH, I HEARD.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BOTH GOING TO BE IN THE NEXT ZODIAC WAR.

YOU HEARD THE NEWS, DIDN'T YOU, BIG BRO?

...

...

WHAT'S WITH THAT WEIRD GETUP?

WAIT, ARE YOU SERIOUS?

YOU SAY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR FRIENDS?

REALLY? REALLY?

WELL THEN, IF YOU'RE SURE ABOUT IT—

LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THE TATSUMI BROTHERS.

WE'LL BE YOUR FRIENDS!

TOUCH ME!!

SWIP

...WE'LL FIND SOME USE FOR HIM.

SURE, HE'S A FREAK, BUT IF WE CAN GET HIM ON OUR SIDE...

BU

N

DAMN. IT'S LIKE ALL THE AIR GOT SUCKED OUT OF THE ROOM.

HEY, LITTLE BRO, JUST LEAVE THAT RABBIT CREEP ...

SWISH

...ALONE—

KR

OX...

KR

THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.

KR

THE STRONGEST FIGHTER IN THIS MATCH.

...TO HAVE OUR FIRST FIGHT AS BROTHERS ...

A HELL OF A TIME...

DAMN IT.

FWSH!!

WORST CASE, I'LL ONLY LOSE AN ARM.

KNCH

KNCH

KNCH

WELL, IT'S NOT ALL BAD.

TP

TP

TP

TP

MINUTES EARLIER, AT GROUND LEVEL—

AU

WHAT'S HE SAYING TO THEM?

THERE'S RABBIT... AND HIS "FRIENDS."

HUFF

HUFF

SW

RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL

WO

OH

SHE THREW HIM SO FAST HE VANISHED IN AN INSTANT.

SO THAT'S WHAT SHE CAN DO...

...WHEN SHE STOPS HOLDING BACK.

STARE

STARE

TPTP TPTP TPTP

FW

P

TT



...AT FULL POWER...

THIS IS MON-KEY...

SHE'S LIKE A HUMAN CATAPULT.

...SHE'S BEEN FREED FROM ANY MORAL BOUNDARIES OR PHYSICAL LIMITS.

IN DEATH...

ACTUALLY ...

WITH HOW SHE IS NOW...

...EVEN THE MOST DIFFICULT OF FEATS...

...WERE SHE ONLY TO DECIDE TO FINISH IT BY FORCE, RATHER THAN SEEK A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION.

...THAT SHE WAS CAPABLE OF PUTTING AN END TO ANY WAR IN A SINGLE DAY...

...

I'VE HEARD IT SAID...

...WOULD BE EASY FOR HER.

...I BET SHE COULD THROW RABBIT ALL THE WAY TO THE MOON.

IF SHE WERE ORDERED TO...

...

HUH ...?

IT'S...

...RAB-BIT ?

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE LEGEND ?

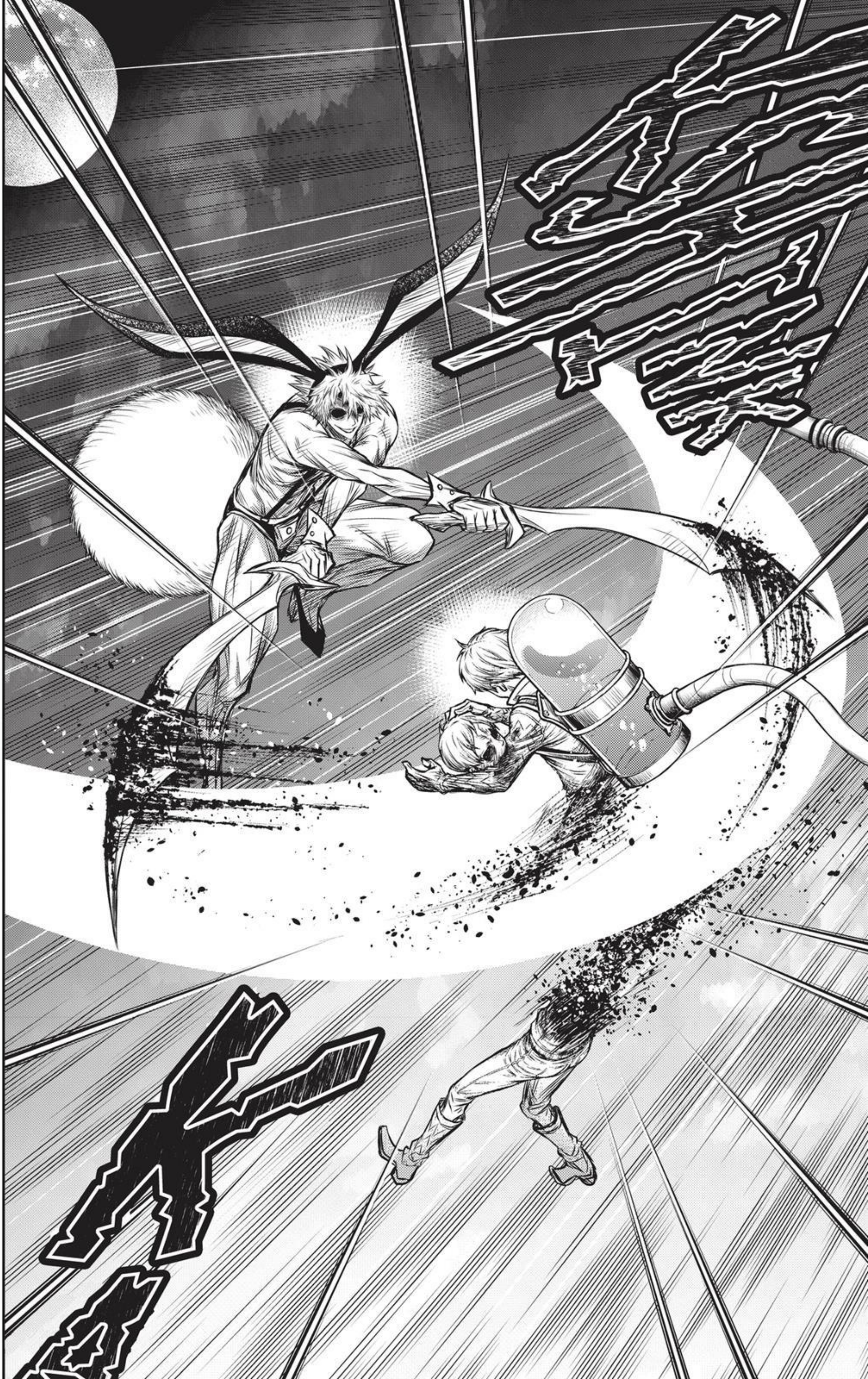
ABOUT THE BUNNY ...

...WHO JUMPED ALL THE WAY TO THE MOON?

...

I KILL WITH *DISTINC-TION.*

I AM *USAGI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *RABBIT.*



GN

!!

...

TIGER, DO YOU HAVE ANY BRIGHT IDEAS—

THIS IS A TOTAL STALE-MATE.

WE'RE OUT OF MOVES...

FWOOSH

FSHH




AND—
THEY'RE BOTH ZOM-BIES!
SH
BOTH TWINS ARE HERE.
OK
...

The realm above the
skies should have belonged
solely and incontestably to
the elder Tatsumi brother,
the Fighter of the Dragon.
Rabbit's incursion had been
a feat beyond miracle.

FWOOOOOOOO

CHAPTER TWENTY

OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

LLL

TWHOOOOSH

GR

ABBB

CHAPTER TWENTY

OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

TIGER.

OX.

RAT.

SHOOOOOOOM

THOOM

THERE'S ...

...ONLY THREE LEFT! ♪

DUN

TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL
TO
TTR
TO
TTR
WOBBL
WOBBL
SPLORT
SPLORT

THERE'S NO MISTAKING HE JUST DIED.

REDUCED TO ANOTHER OF *RABBIT'S* MINIONS.

IT'S *DRAG-ON—*

ALTHOUGH IF WE'RE ONLY COUNTING HEADS, WE'RE STILL EVEN.

FROM THE HEAD COUNT BEFORE, WE HAD THE NUMBERS ADVANTAGE...

IT'S TWO-ON-TWO NOW. OR IS THAT FOUR AGAINST TWO?

IF THEY WERE STILL ALIVE, THAT'S WHAT THEY'D SAY.

TOO BAD THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE FOR THEM ANYMORE.

...IS SHOW THESE FALLEN WARRIORS RESPECT.

BUT THE LEAST WE CAN DO...

WH

"I AM **TATSUMI THE YOUNGER,** THE FIGHTER OF THE **SNAKE.** I KILL FOR **MONEY.**"

"I AM **TATSUMI THE ELDER,** THE FIGHTER OF THE **DRAGON.** I KILL FOR **MONEY.**"

OO

W

I AM *TORA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER*. I KILL WITH *DRUNKEN POWER!*

!!

FW

I AM *USHII*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX*. I JUST *KILL!*

SH

二丁目歩道橋

DRAGON AND SNAKE.

OR THE ZOMBIE TWINS WITH A LIFETIME OF TEAM-WORK—

OX AND TIGER— TWO FIGHTERS WHO SPECIALIZE IN SKILL OVER STRATEGY?

WHICH TEAM WILL BREAK THIS STANDOFF FIRST?

SH

OOF

!!

OR SO I'VE HEARD.

NO MATTER HOW SMALL, A SNAKE WILL STILL TRY TO SWALLOW A MAN.

FWA

VRR

VRR

HOO

VRR

GLRE

GLRE

GLRE

GLRE

GLRE

WRL

WRL

WRL

SLICING THE HEAD APART ISN'T AN OPTION, AND CATCHING IT COMES WITH TOO MUCH RISK.

SHOULD I DODGE IT?

NO. IF I LOSE SIGHT OF IT, I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO ITS NEXT MOVE.

THAT LEAVES ME NO CHOICE—

BUT TO DO THIS!

HA

ONE

TWO

HA

HA

HO

HOOO

FROM THE RIGHT!

FROM THE LEFT!

FROM ABOVE!

AND FROM BELOW!

WURL


SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP
SWAP

THW AP

KK

AM M

GW AA

F

ZTSH


THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

SNAKE'S SEVERED HEAD—

THAT'S THE KEY TO THIS RELENTLESS, COORDINATED ATTACK.

...FROM SO MANY DIREC-TIONS.

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME DIZZY.

SO MANY DIFFERENT ATTACKS...

VRRRRRRR

AND DRAGON CAN SEE IT AS WELL.

RABBIT CAN SEE EVERYTHING THAT SNAKE'S EYES SEE.

FWSH

THAT INSTANT SHARED AWARENESS IS WHAT MAKES THIS ALL-OUT, ALL-DIRECTION ASSAULT POSSIBLE.

KR
WHOOO
WURL
WURL
WURL
AM
WA/
KRAK
RNNNRCH
THNK

THEY JUST DON'T STOP.

THERE'S NO REST FOR THE DEAD.

SHIP

UM

DO

HUFF

IDEAS?

OR SOME KIND OF SPECIAL ABILITY THAT CAN GET US OUT OF THIS?

HUFF

HUFF

LISTEN, *TIGER*, I WAS ASKING YOU BE-FORE—

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS?

HUFF

I SEE.

WELL, DON'T FEEL BAD.

I DON'T HAVE ANY HIDDEN POWERS EITHER.

...EVEN AFTER I'VE RIPPED THEM TO SHREDS.

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING THAT CAN DEAL WITH ENEMIES WHO REFUSE TO DIE...

HUFF

SORRY, MY ONLY POWER IS MY *DRUNKEN FIST.*

HUFF

AND I HAVEN'T HAD TO COME UP WITH ONE FOR A LONG TIME— BUT THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERYTHING.

ARE

ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT MUCH FOR FANCY TRICKS...

Now that the necromanticist
had set all his forces to attack,
the swordsman knew the Zodiac War
was drawing to a close.

HUFF

...BUT THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERY-THING.

HUFF

HUFF

ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT MUCH FOR FANCY TRICKS...

HUFF

HUFF

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

RAT, OX, TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, MONKEY

...

...SINCE I CAME UP WITH A STRAT-EGY.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THAT THING STRAPPED TO ITS BACK?

TAKE A LOOK AT THAT FLOATING HALF.

YOU TRYIN' TO TELL ME IT'S NOT A FLAME-THROWER LIKE HIS BROTHER'S?

?

DON'T YOU SEE?

IT CAN...

SO?

WHAT'S LIQUID HYDRO-GEN DO?

...?

THE STUFF INSIDE OF IT...

...IS PROBABLY LIQUID HYDRO-GEN.

IF ANYTHING, IT'S THE OPPOSITE— AN *ICE-THROWER.*

SLASH

SLASH

WAAA

THEY'RE ATTACK-ING ALL AT ONCE...

...AND FROM EVERY DIREC-TION!

RRRR

...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...

...BEFORE OX AND I SLIP UP.

I CAN BLOCK THEIR ATTACKS WITH MY DRUNKEN FIST, BUT...

WE NEED TO BREAK OUT OF THIS STALEMATE...

...BEFORE DRAGON STOPS HOLDING BACK.

WAIT, WHY IS HE HOLDING BACK?

WHY ISN'T HE USING THAT WEAPON?

RKM

...IS DEFEND OURSELVES.

ALL WE CAN DO...

GRRRR

...

OH,
I GET IT.
THE LIQUID
HYDROGEN.

TAP

TAP

THUD

!!

SW

WW

P

KRAK

KRRR


GNA
PP

UN

TP

TP

TP

ドドド

I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE, YEAH?

...BUT THIS ONE WASN'T USING ITS WEAPON AT ALL.

THE OTHER ONE KEPT ON USING THAT FLAME-THROWER...

RIGHT. AND...

GLOW

...THESE ZOMBIES RUSH TOWARD THE NEAREST TARGET IN A STRAIGHT LINE.

DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN

...WHENEVER ANY DISTANCE OPENS UP...

ZWOOM

THEY KEEP ON ATTACKING, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE BUNCHED TOGETHER.

FWAP

THEY AREN'T AFRAID OF HITTING EACH OTHER.

MWAH

FWAP

FWAP

SHI

HYAA!

SHI

HYO

SHI

KIN

HYO

HUP!

HUP

FREEZE

FREEZE

BECAUSE FREEZ-ING WILL BE...

HUFF

HUFF

YOU COULDN'T RISK BEING FROZEN, COULD YOU?

HUFF

...THE ULTIMATE

...

KICK

...IT'S
THE
END!!

SS

KRAK

KRIK

KRAK

KRAK

FWI

FWI

KNK

KNK

FSHHHHHH

AND NOW...

...THEY'LL NEVER BE SEPARATED AGAIN.

THE BROTHERS' BODIES ARE SHATTERED AND MIXED TOGETHER— AS ONE.

SH

HEY!

F

YOU WERE LATE ...

...BUT THANKFULLY, NOT *TOO* LATE.

I'M GLAD YOU PICKED UP ON MY STRAT-EGY.

GRRRRRR

GRRR! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM YOU!

HOW THE HELL WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO...

...WHEN YOU'RE SO DAMN VAGUE ?!

THOSE ZOMBIES WERE DEAD, BUT THEY COULD STILL SEE.

I DIDN'T WANT TO SPELL OUT THE PLAN IN CASE THEY COULD STILL HEAR TOO.

FANCY TRICKS AREN'T MY THING.

I SHOULD JUST STICK WITH WHAT I KNOW.

BUT AT LEAST IT ALL WORKED OUT THIS TIME.

YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE WORKED OUT FOR ME?

YOU BEING FLASH FROZEN ALONG WITH THOSE FREAKS.

GRRRR ...

URP...

HOW-EVER ...

I STILL INTEND TO KEEP MY PROMISE...

I'LL CHALLENGE YOU TO THAT DUEL.

OH? IS THAT REALLY WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE WANTED?

I THINK WE'LL BE EXTENDING IT FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER. YOU'VE NOTICED IT TOO, HAVEN'T YOU?

FW

OUR PARTNER-SHIP ISN'T DONE.

HE

HEY!

COME ON OUT, YOU BASTARD!

DU

YEAH...

YOU'RE EVEN WORSE AT HIDING THAN THAT OLD MAN, *SHEEP!*

HMPH!

IWW

I THINK IT WAS AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE.

YAWN ...

HMMM ...

TP TP TP TP

SHF SHF

!!

I'M PRETTY SURE...

MONKEY!

JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR VOL. 3 (END)

"I wish for friends."



USAGI,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE
RABBIT

DETAILS
UNKNOWN

TORA,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE TIGER

REAL NAME:
KANAE AIRA

HEIGHT:
154 CM
WEIGHT:
42 KG



"I wish for rightness."

USHII,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE OX

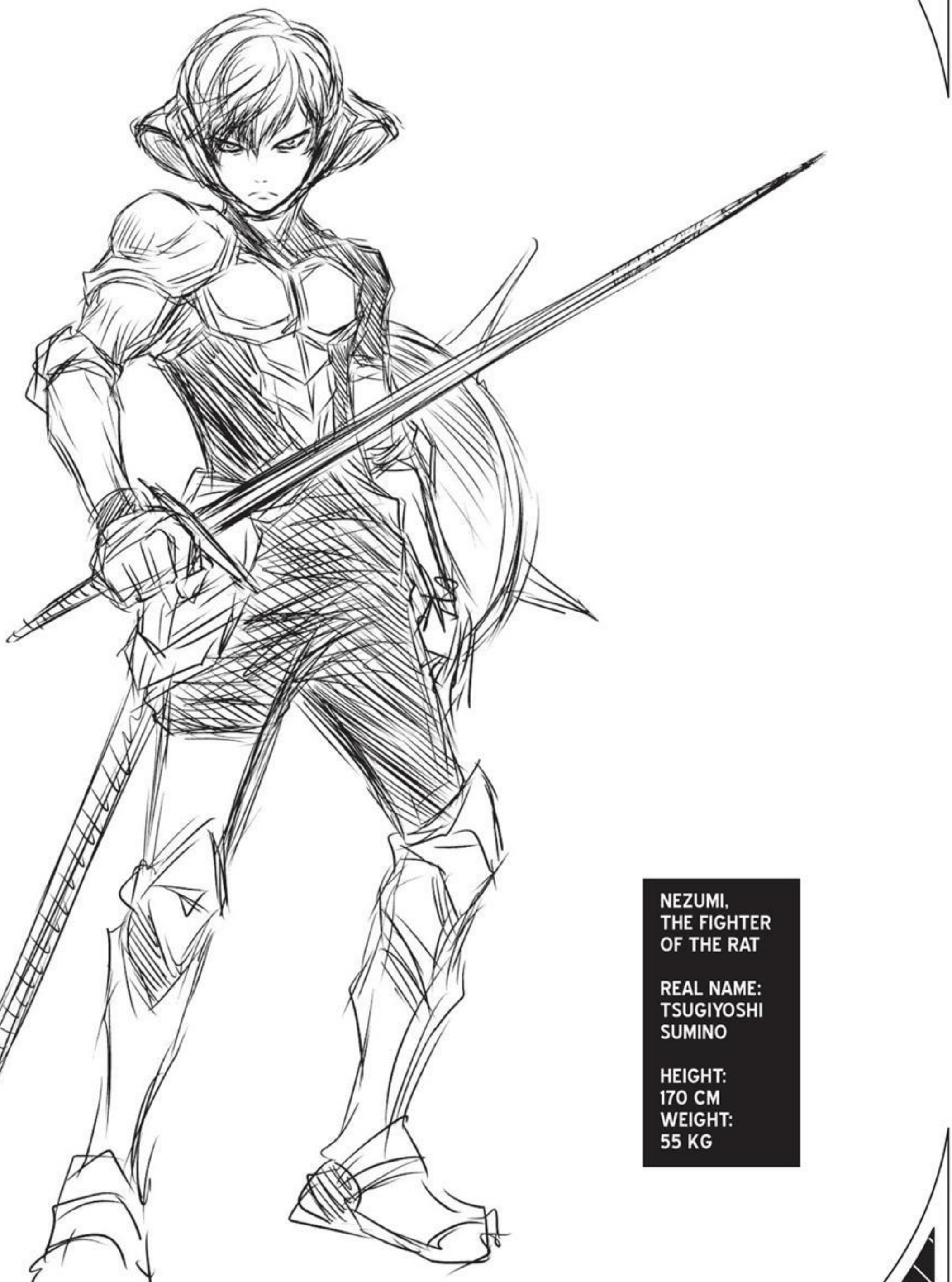
REAL NAME:
EIJI KASHII

HEIGHT:
181 CM
WEIGHT:
72 KG



"I wish to be saved."

"I wish to dream."



NEZUMI,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE RAT

REAL NAME:
TSUGIYOSHI
SUMINO

HEIGHT:
170 CM
WEIGHT:
55 KG

When I first read the original novel, *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War*, one character more than any other made me wonder, "What the heck is going on in your head?" I'm not talking about Rabbit or Monkey—no, I am talking about Dragon. His twin brother is killed right before his eyes and he heads off to battle unfazed? And his wish is for nothing? That's a bit hard for me to grasp when there's no end to what I'd wish for...

And so when the Tatsumi Brothers took center stage in this volume, I tried giving the twins my own interpretation. Whether it was the *right* interpretation, I don't know.

Perhaps the twins occupy their own world, one beyond the comprehension of anyone outside themselves.

—Akira Akatsuki

AKIRA AKATSUKI

Born 1977, Akira Akatsuki made his manga debut in 2003 with *Z-XL Dai* in *Akamaru Jump*. He later published a number of one shots, such as *Angel Agent*, *Contractor M&Y* and *Little Brave Pukateriosu*, in *Jump the Revolution!*, *Weekly Shonen Jump* and *Akamaru Jump*, respectively. His most notable work and first major collaboration with NISIOISIN, *Medaka Box*, premiered in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 2009 and concluded in 2013. He published two more one shots, *Toshokan Kyuuseishu Kurabu* (*Library Savior Club*) and *Musume Iri-Hako* (*The Girl in the Box*), the latter of which was another collaboration with NISIOISIN, before starting work on *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* in 2017 on *Jump+*.

NISIOISIN

Born 1981. In 2002, NISIOISIN's novel *The Beheading Cycle* won the 23rd Mephisto Prize and became his debut publication. Among his numerous novels are the *Zaregoto* series, the *Monogatari* series, the *Densetsu* series, and the *Bōkyaku Tantei* series. He also wrote the manga tie-in novel *Death Note: Another Note*. As a manga writer, he has appeared in the *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine with his series *Medaka Box* and his *Ōgiri* series of one-shot manga stories have seen the pages of *Weekly Shonen Jump*, *Jump SQ*, *Weekly Young Jump* and *Bessatsu Margaret*.

HIKARU NAKAMURA

Born 1984. Illustrator Hikaru Nakamura made her debut in 2001 with her manga *Kairi no Sue* in the *Monthly Gangan Wing* magazine. Her other works include *Arakawa Under the Bridge*, published in *Young Gangan*, and 2009 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize winner *Saint Young Men*, published in *Monthly Morning Two*. She previously collaborated with NISIOISIN for his *Ōgiri* series with "The One Wish I Really Want to Come True, and the Ninety-Nine Others I Don't So Much."

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

3

SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

TRANSLATION
Nathan A. Collins

LETTERING
Mark McMurray

RETOUCH
James Gaubatz

DESIGN
Alice Lewis

EDITOR
Marlene First

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence and adult themes.

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4

MANGA BY

AKIRA AKATSUKI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY

NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY

HIKARU NAKAMURA

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
NISIOISIN

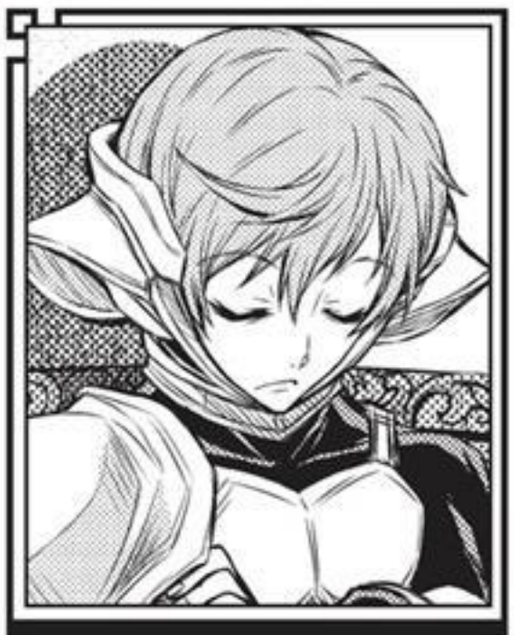
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
HIKARU NAKAMURA

4



The Fighter of the Tiger
TORA

Kills with Drunken Power
• *Drunken Fist*



The Fighter of the Rat
NEZUMI

Kills Inexorably



The Fighter of the Rabbit
USAGI

Kills with Distinction
• *Necromanticist*



The Fighter of the Ox
USHII

Just Kills

JUNI TAISEN
ZODIAC WAR
THE TWELVE FIGHTERS

1

The Zodiac War is held every twelve years.

2

Twelve fierce warriors take on the names of the Zodiac.

3

The sole victor will be granted any single wish.

4

The twelve warriors each possess unique superpowers.





The Fighter of the Dog
DOTSUKU

Kills with Bites
- *Michio Tsukui*
- *Mad Dog's Vise*



The Fighter of the Monkey
SHARYŪ

Kills in Peace
- *Misaki Yūki*
- *Senjutsu*



The Fighter of the Horse
UUMA

Kills in Silence
- *Yoshimi Sōma*
- *Defensive Ability: Stirrup*



The Fighter of the Dragon
TATSUMI BROTHER, the Elder

Kills for Money
- *Nagayuki Tsumita*
- *Heaven's Holding*



The Fighter of the Boar
INŌNOSHISHI

Kills in Abundance
- *Toshiko Inō*
- *Making It Rain*



The Fighter of the Chicken
NIWATORI

Kills by Pecks
- *Ryōka Niwa*
- *Eye of the Cormorant*



The Fighter of the Sheep
HITSUJII

Kills with Deception
- *Sumihiko Tsujiie*
- *Hand Grenade: Hideous Burial*



The Fighter of the Snake
TATSUMI BROTHER, the Younger

Kills for Money
- *Takeyasu Tsumita*
- *Earth's Guidance*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 22	Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Monkey	005
CHAPTER 23	Ox, Tiger, Rabbit	024
CHAPTER 24	Ox, Tiger, Rabbit	047
CHAPTER 25	Ox, Rabbit, Monkey	069
CHAPTER 26	Rat, Ox, Rabbit, Monkey	089
CHAPTER 27	Rat, Ox, Rabbit, Monkey	109
CHAPTER 28	Rat	129
CHAPTER 29	The Twelve	153
BONUS NOVEL CHAPTER	The Night Before the War	203

...

MONKEY!

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

RAT, OX, TIGER, RABBIT, MONKEY

...

SH

...

F

HMPH!

RL

RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
WAH
?

!!

WOOOO

GWOOOOO

SWF

SWF

TP TP TP TP TP

...

SH

F

HE MUST'VE DECIDED HE COULDN'T LEAVE OX AND TIGER TO MONKEY.

RABBIT WANTS TO TAKE COMMAND OF THE STRONGEST WARRIORS WITH THEIR BODIES INTACT.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN.

SHE'S NOT HOLDING BACK ANY-MORE.

...

KLTR

...

KLTR

...THEY CAN GO TOO FAR— LEAVING NOTHING USABLE BEHIND.

WHEN HIS UNDEAD MINIONS KILL...

"PLEASE KILL ME."

...AND I FALL UNDER THE NECROMAN-TICIST'S CONTROL..."

"IF I DIE...

...CON-TROL...

THE NECRO-MANTICIST'S ...

I SEE.

AND MON-KEY.

RABBIT ...

SW SH

SW SH

...

...YOU'VE BEEN FIGHTING ON A *TEAM* YOURSELF.

AFTER ALL...

I TRUST YOU WON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT FACING THE TWO OF US.

THIS IS STRANGE.

...

I KILL WITH *DISTINC-TION.*

I AM *USAGI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *RABBIT.*

IT'S AS IF...

YET HE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF DESPAIR.

THIS IS A CRISIS FAR WORSE THAN HE COULD HAVE IMAGINED.

HIS TWO MINIONS HAVE BEEN SHATTERED TO BITS, AND NOW HE FACES TWO ENEMIES ALONE.

EVEN BEFORE HE WAS BORN...

...HE WAS ALREADY IN THE DEPTHS OF IT.

...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO FALL DEEPER INTO DESPAIR.

IT IS ALSO A BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL.

EVEN THOUGH COUNTRIES ARE WON OR LOST BASED ON THE ZODIAC WAR'S OUTCOME...

ALL THE MORE REA-SON ...

TO FIGHT.

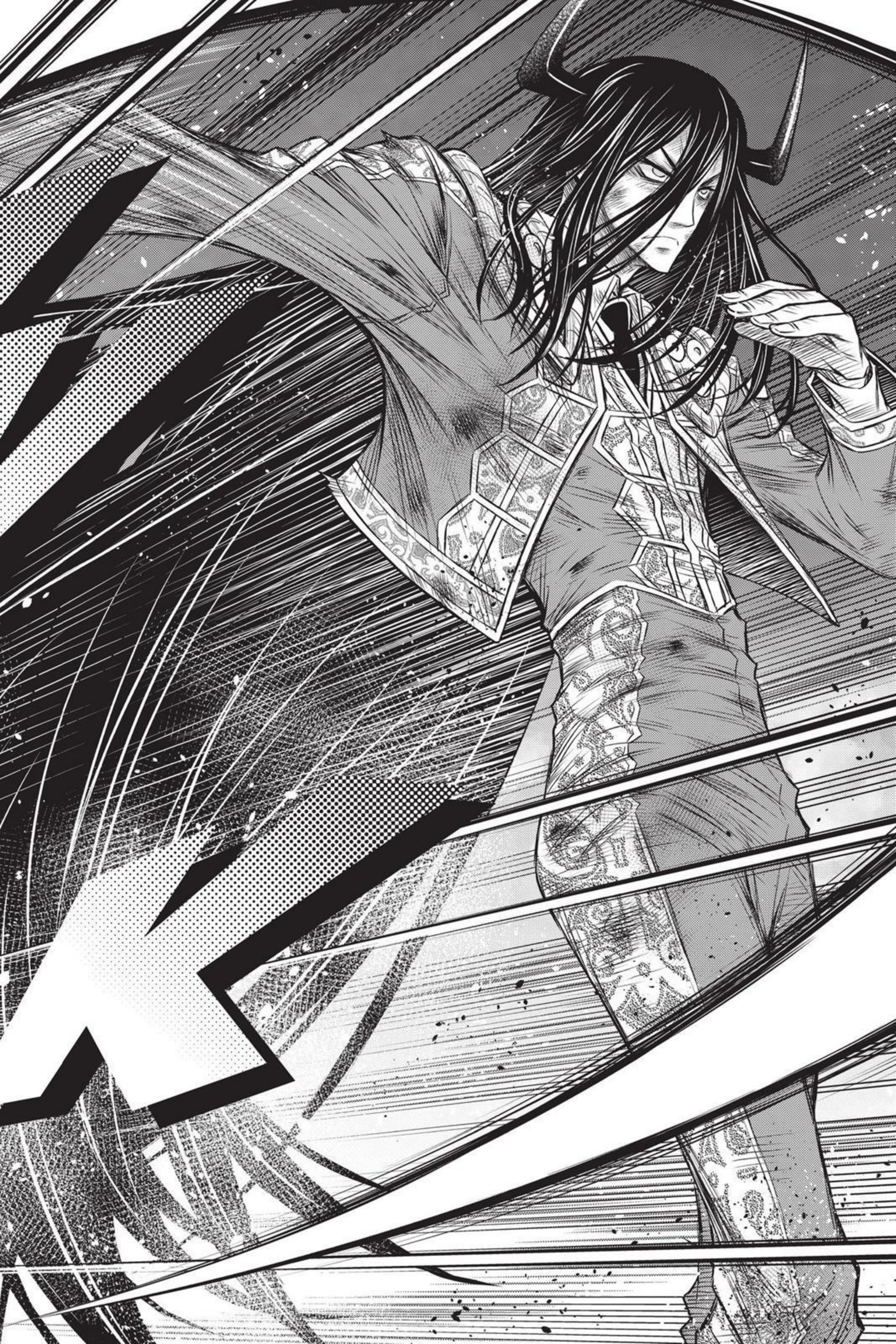
I AM *TORA*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER!* I KILL WITH *DRUNKEN POWER.*

I AM *USHII*, THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX!* I JUST *KILL.*

GWOO

KR
CH!

KR
NC
H





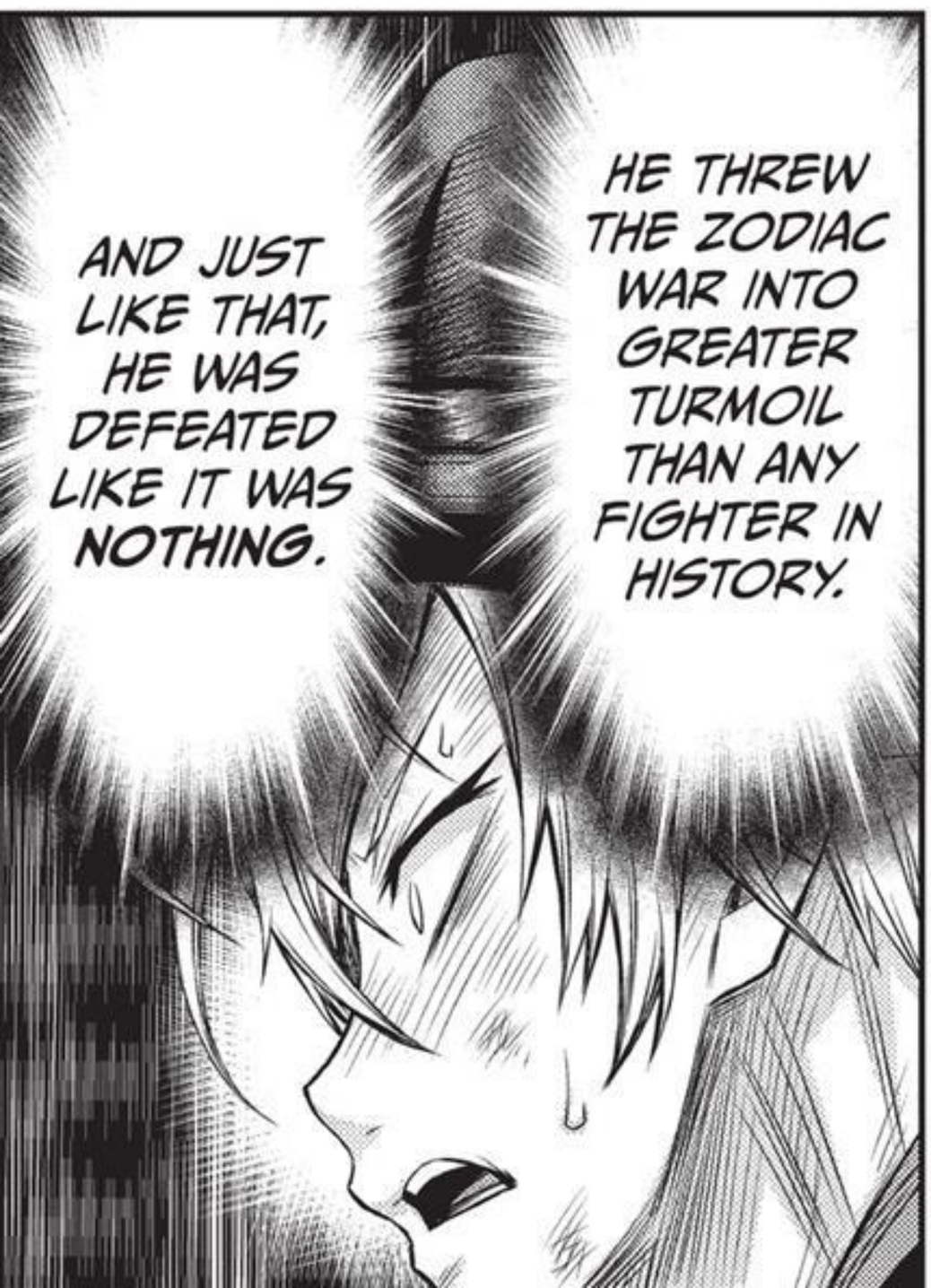
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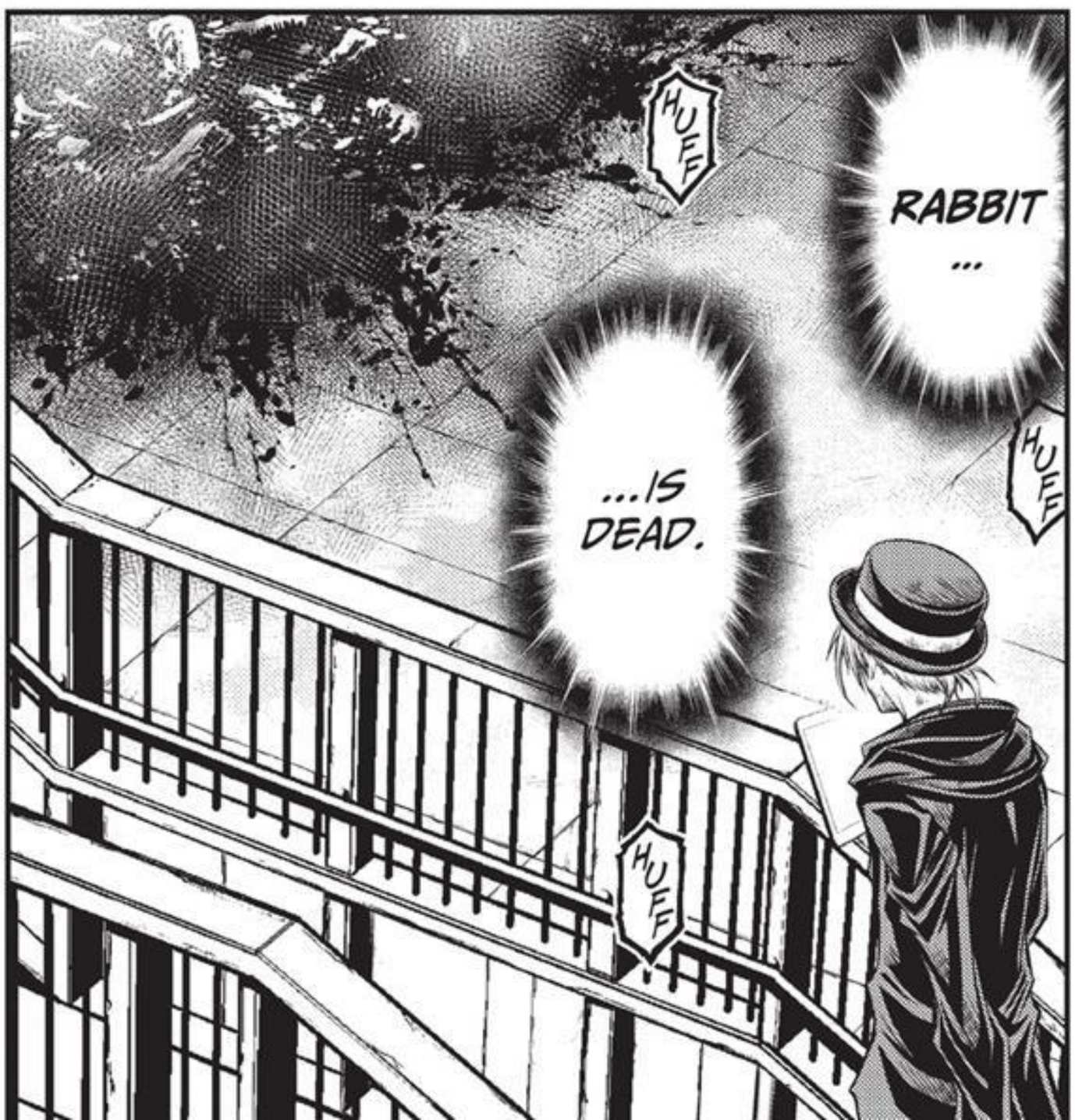


SPLAT

THUD THD THD


GLOOO
QWR
QWR
QWR
QWR


AND JUST LIKE THAT, HE WAS DEFEATED LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.
HE THREW THE ZODIAC WAR INTO GREATER TURMOIL THAN ANY FIGHTER IN HISTORY.


HUFF
RABBIT ...
...IS DEAD.
HUFF
HUFF

I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED. **OX** AND **TIGER** ARE PURE FIGHTING ABILITY DISTILLED INTO HUMAN FORM.

A NECRO-MANTICIST WITHOUT ANY CORPSES TO COM-MAND...

...DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE ON HIS OWN.

...

...

WELL THEN.

WOULD YOU RATHER TAKE A SHORT BREAK FIRST?

FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER?*

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

FIGHTER OF THE *OX.*

IT'S TAKEN ME YEARS TO GET HERE.

BUT FINALLY ...

...THIS MOMENT HAS COME.

...

ALL RIGHT.

SH

OUR ALLIANCE IS NOW OVER.

F W !!

/P

ALL THIS BLOOD HAS GOT ME NICE AND *DRUNK*.

NOW PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT, WILL YOU? I WANNA HAVE SOME FUN.

IT'S A *DUEL.*

COME.

NOD

THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT ...

...

BEEP

NOT FOUND

BEEP

...FOR A FIGHTER LIKE THAT?

IS THIS REALLY THE END...

HE'S SO FAR BEYOND NORMAL WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I TRY LOOKING HIM UP IN THE INTERNAL DATABASE, I GET NOTHING.

GWOOOO

QWVR

QWVR

Shiro-usagi and
Sangatsu-usagi—
The cursed weapons
with which he had created
so many corpses. Rather,
the curse belonged to
him, not his weapons.

BORN ON JANUARY 1. SHE'S 154 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 42 KILOGRAMS.

THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER. REAL NAME, KANAE AIRA.

GRRRRR

...TORA, THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER...

...WAS ONCE A DEEPLY CONTEM-PLATIVE GIRL.

LOOKING AT HER NOW, IT MIGHT BE HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT...

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

OX, TIGER, RABBIT

THROUGH HER TRAINING, SHE CAME TO BELIEVE THAT FIGHTING, WITH ALL ITS BARBARISM AND VIOLENCE...

...WAS THE ONE TRUE PATH FOR HER TO FOLLOW.

SHE WAS EARNEST TO A FAULT. IF SHE HAD BEEN BORN INTO A DIFFERENT FAMILY— AND NOT A MILITARY CLAN—SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ALL RIGHT.

...SHE COULDN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT WHAT SHE SAW.

WHEN SHE VENTURED ONTO REAL BATTLE-FIELDS...

...WAS NOT RIGHT FOR HER.

BUT THAT BELIEF ...

SHE COULDN'T SHUT OUT THE QUES-TIONS.

HOW MUCH IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

WOULDN'T THE WORLD BE BETTER OFF IF MANKIND WENT EXTINCT?

DO WE EVEN DESERVE TO LIVE?

WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TO FIGHT EACH OTHER?

...WERE ALL JUST EMPTY POLITICAL PROMISES.

WHAT SHE HAD ONCE SEEN AS JUST AND RIGHT...

...WAS WHAT PROPPED UP THE SYSTEM FROM WITHIN.

HUFF

WHAT SHE HAD ONCE SEEN AS HARMFUL EVIL...

NOT JUST SOME PEOPLE— A GREAT MANY.

HUFF

HUFF

SHE SAW THAT WAR WAS THE ONLY REASON SOME PEOPLE HAD TO LIVE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MY ONE TRUE PATH?

HUFF

HUFF

...

HUFF

IN THE END...

AS MUCH AS SHE TRIED TO WALK STRAIGHT, AND AS EARNESTLY AS SHE TRIED TO LIVE...

...THE WORLD COULD NEVER PERMIT HER TO CONTINUE.

WHEN SHE TRIED TO PUSH FORWARD THROUGH THE MUD AND THE MUCK...

...SOMEONE WOULD COME ALONG AND LEAD HER ASTRAY.

HER PATH THROUGH LIFE...

...TURNED OUT TO BE NOTHING BUT AN ILLUSION.

...LEFT HER PATH.

TIGER...

NOTHING TROUBLED HER ANYMORE.

WBBL

WHEN SHE WAS DRUNK, SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO THINK.

WBBL

...SHE LEFT IT OF HER OWN FREE WILL.

RATHER THAN ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO CHANGE HER COURSE...

SLOSH

SLOSH

TIGER DIDN'T HAVE **MONKEY'S** GOOD KIND OF STUBBORN-NESS.

WHAT SHE HAD WAS A KIND OF PURITY. AND WHERE HAD THAT GOTTEN HER?

SHE DIDN'T HAVE **CHICKEN'S** STUBBORN-NESS EITHER.

BUT LIFE HAD ONE MORE CRUEL JOKE FOR HER— THE MORE SHE DRANK, THE BETTER A WARRIOR SHE BECAME.

BY SATURATING HER MIND WITH ALCOHOL, SHE ERASED ALL UNNECESSARY THOUGHTS.

ETHICS

MORALS

JUDGMENT

VALUES

WHERE ONCE THERE WERE THE DOUBTS AND SORROWS OF A SOLDIER WITH A CONSCIENCE...

...NOW THERE WAS ONLY BLOOD AND BOOZE.

SHE NO LONGER KNEW WHAT SHE WAS FIGHTING FOR, BUT STILL SHE WON.

SHE STOPPED PUTTING EFFORT INTO HER FIGHTING, BUT STILL SHE WON.

...THAN WHEN I TOOK FIGHTING SERIOUSLY.

AHH... I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAVE A BETTER REPUTATION NOW...

SHA

RS

TL

SKSHHH

FA

RST

RST

RST

THOUGHT SO.

A TRAP ?

FWI

SH

!!

GUESS IT'S TIME TO DO MY THING.

STG

WHAT-EVER.

GR

SHK

SHK

SHK

FOOSH

ARE YOU HURT?

YOUNG MISS.

FOOSH

GA

SP

HM?

DID HE SERIOUSLY CALL ME "YOUNG MISS"?!

SLUMP

WAIT...

THERE'S NO ONE HERE TO HARM YOU.

DON'T WORRY. YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW.

I'LL TAKE YOU SOME-PLACE SAFE.

G R R R R

COME.

IT WAS BEAUTI-FUL.

WHO IS THIS MAN?! HE TOOK OFF ALL THOSE SOLDIERS' HEADS INSTANTLY!

MORE THAN THAT, HE ACTED WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.

THAT'S THE SWORD OF A MAN WHO TRULY BELIEVES THAT HE'S DOING THE RIGHT THING IN THE RIGHT WAY.

TP

TP

TP

TP

YOU'RE DRUNK. IT'S ON YOUR FACE AND IN YOUR BREATH.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE SOLDIERS FORCED YOU TO DRINK LIKE THAT. HOW UTTERLY DESPICABLE.

HEY, I SAID PUT ME DOWN.

REALLY, I CAN WALK ON MY OWN!

...TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT LIKE THAT.

...IS WHAT HE DID ...

WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW...

...

GL

ANCE

HRMPH...

NO, I DID THAT TO MYSELF.

HOW DOES HE DO THE RIGHT THINGS ...

...WITHOUT HESITATION, DOUBT OR MISTAKES?

HM?

IS SOME-THING WRONG ?

...

UM...

...

NO

D

THE RIGHT THING, YOU ASK...? I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE.

TELL ME, YOUNG MISS...

DO YOU WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING?

IN THAT CASE, LET ME THINK ABOUT IT.

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE GOOD TO PUT ONE'S PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT...

...INTO WORDS.

FIRST, YOU DECIDE TO DO THE RIGHT THING, I SUPPOSE.

SECOND, YOU DO IT.

THAT IS ALL.

HUH?

...

...

WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?

...

...YOU CAN'T DO THE RIGHT THING UNLESS YOU FIRST *DECIDE* TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

DON'T YOU SEE? THE POINT IS...

I THOUGHT I'D FORGOTTEN THAT PAIN A LONG TIME AGO.

WAIT! I'M HURT-ING?

BUT IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE FOR ME. I CAN'T DO IT— THAT'S WHY I'M HURTING!

MAYBE THAT COMES EASY TO HIM.

ONE DAY THEY FIND THEMSELVES HAVING BEEN LED ASTRAY ONTO THE WRONG PATH.

NOT BECAUSE OF ANY REASON, ANY THOUGHT OR ANY INTENTION.

ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, PEOPLE ERR... CIRCUMSTANCES CARRY THEM INTO MISDEEDS.

WITHOUT INTENT, THERE IS NO BEING RIGHT.

OR "AT SOME POINT, I MUST HAVE STARTED DOING GOOD DEEDS."

THE OPPOSITE NEVER HAPPENS. NO ONE SAYS, "I WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING, AND I DIDN'T REALIZE IT."

...

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DO THE RIGHT THING...

...

THAT'S BECAUSE ...

...YOU HAVEN'T DECIDED THAT *YOU* WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

...

THAT'S ...

THAT'S NOT THE POINT. IT'S NATURAL FOR HIM BUT NOT FOR ME.

...

I'M NOT SAYING YOU *ALWAYS* HAVE TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

BUT DON'T EVER FORGET— IT'S NOT BECAUSE YOU *CAN'T.*

IT'S BECAUSE YOU *DON'T.*

EVERYONE WHO DOES RIGHT FOLLOWS THE STEPS— *DECIDE,* THEN *ACT.*

IT'S THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY TO WORRY OVER THE SECOND STEP WHEN YOU'RE STILL ON THE FIRST.

MUR

MUR

MUR

NOW, TRY NOT TO GO NEAR A WAR ZONE AGAIN.

I HAVE TO LEAVE. I HAVE OTHER BOYS AND GIRLS LIKE YOU TO RESCUE. IT'S MY JOB.

...

SO THAT YOU'LL NEVER MEET ANOTHER KILLER— **ANOTHER SLAYER**— LIKE ME.

I'LL BE PRAYING FOR YOU.

...AND HE BATTLES THEM HEAD-ON.

HE LOOKS AT THE CONTRA-DICTIONS OF WAR WITH CLEAR EYES...

HE'S RIGHT ABOUT EVERY-THING.

BUT WE'RE NOTHING AT ALL ALIKE.

WE'RE SUP-POSEDLY BOTH WARRIORS.

...TO BE CALLED WAR-RIORS.

...WHO TRULY HAVE THE RIGHT...

IT'S ONLY THE PEOPLE LIKE HIM...

I WANT TO BE ONE TOO.

THE NEXT TIME I MEET THAT MAN...

...I WANT TO BE SOMEONE HE WILL ACKNOWL-EDGE AS A WARRIOR.

NOW, YEARS LATER, AT THIS TOURNAMENT, I'VE FINALLY MET HIM AGAIN.

WHO ARE YOU?

HM?

H-HEY THERE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

...BUT NOW I KNOW. I'LL FIGHT THAT IDIOT— THAT **OX** OF A MAN— ONE-ON-ONE.

I WASN'T SURE WHAT I'D DO WHEN I MET HIM AGAIN ...

HE HAS NO REASON TO REMEMBER ME NOW.

BACK THEN, HE SAW ME AS JUST SOME GIRL HE RESCUED.

I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED.

...AS THE WAR-RIOR I AM.

I'LL MAKE HIM SEE ME...

DU

N

UR

JO

!!

She lost her ability to strategize and started fighting haphazardly. It didn't hinder her. She stopped being able to remember the names of her allies, so she started fighting alone. It didn't hinder her. She lost the ability to read expressions, so she quit looking at her enemies' faces. It didn't hinder her. She stopped being able to tell the difference between who was important and who wasn't, so she started treating everyone as though they were unimportant. It didn't hinder her. She couldn't read maps anymore. It didn't hinder her. She stopped being able to read kanji that had more than six brush strokes. It didn't hinder her. She could still do multiplication, but not division. It didn't hinder her. She had long since become unaware of what day it was, but now had to struggle to remember her own birthday. It didn't hinder her. She could no longer walk in a straight line. It didn't hinder her. She couldn't even tell if she was still alive or if she was dead. It didn't hinder her. None of it did.

Then, one such unhindered day, Tiger met a lone master.

I KNOW!

I KNOW.

...BRINGS DISGRACE TO ALL FIGHTERS.

YOU'RE THINKING THAT ATTACKING YOU BY SURPRISE, WITHOUT NAMING MYSELF...

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

OX, TIGER, RABBIT

BUT WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

...
WARN
...

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO...

YOU'LL

TIGER
!!

VW

SHOK

WHAT
?!

SPL

RT

I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD!!

FKP

THAT'S RABBIT'S HAND!

RTZ

RTZ

WP

SH

ドリル

IT'S JUST LIKE ONE OF HIS ZOMBIES.

I'VE SEEN THIS BE-FORE.

HAS HE TURNED HIMSELF INTO HIS OWN **PUPPET** ?

COULD RABBIT HAVE KILLED HIMSELF **BEFORE** THEY KILLED HIM?

...IS NOT OVER YET FOR THE NECRO-MANTICIST.

TWITCH

THE ZODIAC WAR....

TWITCH

TWITCH

...


SLASH
AH
AH
SPIN
KICK

THE MORE I SLICE HIM APART, THE MORE ENEMIES I CREATE.

BUT FOR NOW ...

SHK

SHK

SHK

GRP

TRM TRM TRM

WHAT-EVER THE COST!

SH

TP

TP TP TP TP TP

HUFF

HUFF

WSH

...HE'S CARRYING ME LIKE A LITTLE GIRL ON HIS BACK...

ONCE AGAIN ...

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T LET YOU DIE!!

HUFF

HUFF

I REFUSE TO LET THIS DEBT GO UNPAID!

NO ONE HAS EVER RISKED THEIR LIFE TO SAVE ME.

FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

THAT WAS ME REPAYING MY DEBT TO HIM!

HUFF

WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP.

HUFF

JUST WHEN I'D FINALLY MADE IT.

JUST WHEN THE **MASTER** HAD FINALLY CHAL-LENGED **ME** TO A FIGHT.

IS THIS HOW MY LIFE ENDS?

IN FAILURE?

I...

WHY DID I DO THAT?

WHAT WAS I THINK-ING?

WHY DID I JUMP IN?

BUT HE'S A MASTER— SURELY HE COULD HAVE HANDLED THAT ATTACK ON HIS OWN.

Ep 1

HUFF

THEN I DID IT.

I DECIDED TO DO IT.

HUFF

...WILL GET WORSE...

...THE BLEED-ING...

PLP

IF YOU KEEP BOUNCING ME AROUND...

PLP

SET ME... DOWN...

...

WE CAN'T STOP FOR LONG THOUGH— NOT WITH THAT THING AFTER US.

WE CAN STOP HERE...

...AND WORK ON STOPPING THE BLEEDING.

HUFF

WE'VE BOUGHT ENOUGH DISTANCE FOR NOW.

HUFF

HUFF

THIS PLACE IS HARDLY EQUIPPED FOR FIXING UP A GUT WOUND.

WORSE YET...

HOLD ON. I'LL FIND A NEARBY HOSPITAL.

I'LL BE BACK WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES AS SOON AS I CAN.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

I JUST DON'T.

HUFF

I DON'T HAVE THAT LONG.

HUFF

NO...

IF YOU DIE HERE, THEN WHAT ABOUT OUR DUEL?!

DON'T GIVE UP!!

LIS-TEN...

FIGHTER OF THE OX...

THAT ONLY LEAVES ONE END...

WE'LL NEVER HAVE THAT DUEL.

...I WON'T BE ABLE TO FIGHT.

HUFF

HUFF

EVEN IF BY SOME MIRACLE HE MANAGES TO STITCH ME UP IN TIME...

HUFF

...HE'S TOO GOOD TO HAVE EVER BEEN WOUNDED LIKE THIS.

HE'S ONLY TALKING THAT WAY BECAUSE ...

A FAVOR?

JUST... DO ME A FAVOR.

I DON'T NEED THAT ANY-MORE.

FORGET ABOUT THE DUEL.

THIS IS WHEN I MIGHT ASK HIM FOR A KISS.

IF I WERE SOME NORMAL GIRL...

I WANT YOU...

HUFF

IT'S... MORE OF A PLEA.

...TO DO JUST *ONE MORE THING* FOR ME.

HUFF

HUFF

THAT'S NOT WHO I AM.

BUT...

PLEASE.

KILL ME.

I DON'T WANT ANY OF IT.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT NECRO-MANTICISTS AND ALL THAT STUFF, BUT...

I'LL TURN INTO ONE OF THOSE *ZOMBIES.*

IT'LL MEAN THAT RABBIT BASTARD *KILLED* ME, WON'T IT?

IF I DIE LIKE THIS...

...MADE ALL MY BATTLES WORTH-WHILE.

JUST HAVING HIM CHALLENGE ME TO A FIGHT...

...TO *DIE* FOR IT.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU BADLY ENOUGH...

...

...ONE OF THOSE WRETCHED ZOMBIES?

YOU'D KILL ME SO THAT I'D NEVER BECOME...

DIDN'T YOU TELL ME EARLIER?

HUFF

BEFORE THAT HAPPENS, I WANT YOU TO KILL ME.

HUFF

GIVE ME A FINE DEATH.

SO THEN, *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER*, JUST KILL ME.

ALL RIGHT.

BUT ...

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THAT DUEL.

NOW, FOLLOW THE CUSTOM AND DECLARE YOUR-SELF.

YOU'LL DIE HAVING FOUGHT AND LOST.

EXCEPT ...

NO, HE'S JUST DOING WHAT'S RIGHT.

CAN'T HE SEE IT'S HARD FOR ME TO SPEAK? HERE I AM ON THE EDGE OF DEATH, AND HE'S STILL GOING TO BE THIS STRICT?

...I MADE A MESS OUT OF MY LIFE.

SOME-WHERE ALONG THE WAY...

ETHICS

MORALS

VALUES

IT'S A BETTER ENDING THAN I DESERVE.

I BETTER BE CAREFUL, OR THIS WILL GO STRAIGHT TO MY HEAD.

BUT AT LEAST I'LL HAVE A PROPER ENDING.

A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIKE ME ...

ONE MORE THING.

...

...DYING IN A DUEL AGAINST A MASTER.

WHY DO YOU HAVE A GRUDGE AGAINST ME?

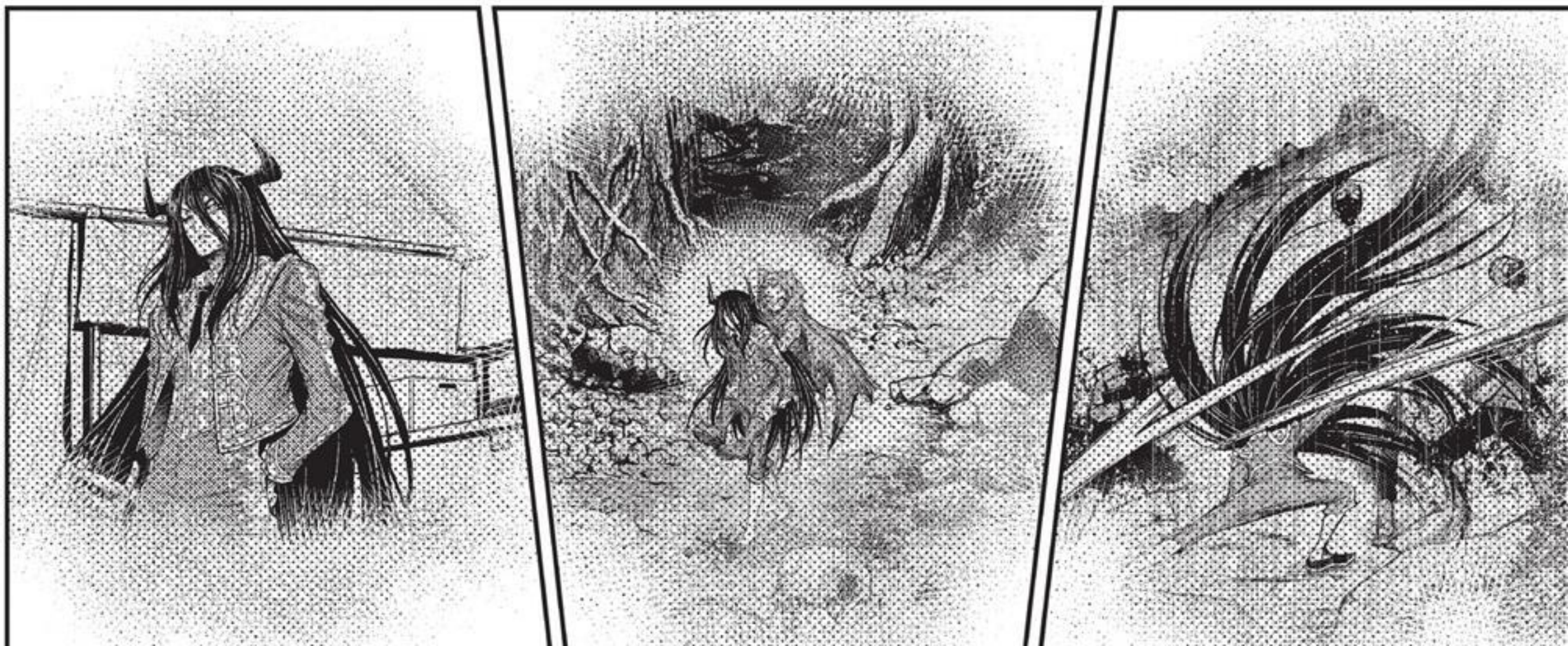
WE'VE MET BEFORE, HAVEN'T WE?

WHICH BATTLE WAS IT?

!!

...

...



I JUST...

I JUST HATE... DREARY MEN... LIKE YOU.

GRRRR...

HUFF

WE'VE NEVER MET BEFORE.

HUFF

I'VE GOT NO GRUDGE AGAINST YOU.

HUFF

HUFF

—

—

—

—

...

THE ONE I MET ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

...THAT REMINDS ME OF THAT GIRL?

WHAT IS IT ABOUT HER...

STA

RE

...AS IF SHE WERE A NAIVE, INNOCENT LITTLE GIRL...

HUFF

NO. IT WOULD BE A GRAVE DISRESPECT TO TREAT THIS STRONG WARRIOR...

HUFF

I JUST *KILL.*

I AM *USHII,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX.*

HUFF

...THE *FIGHTER OF THE TIGER...* I KILL WITH...

...DRUNK-EN... POWER.

KOFF

I AM *TORA...*

HUFF

HUFF

Wish

DRUNKARD AND WIELDER OF THE DRUNKEN FIST.

SHE WAS TORA, THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER.

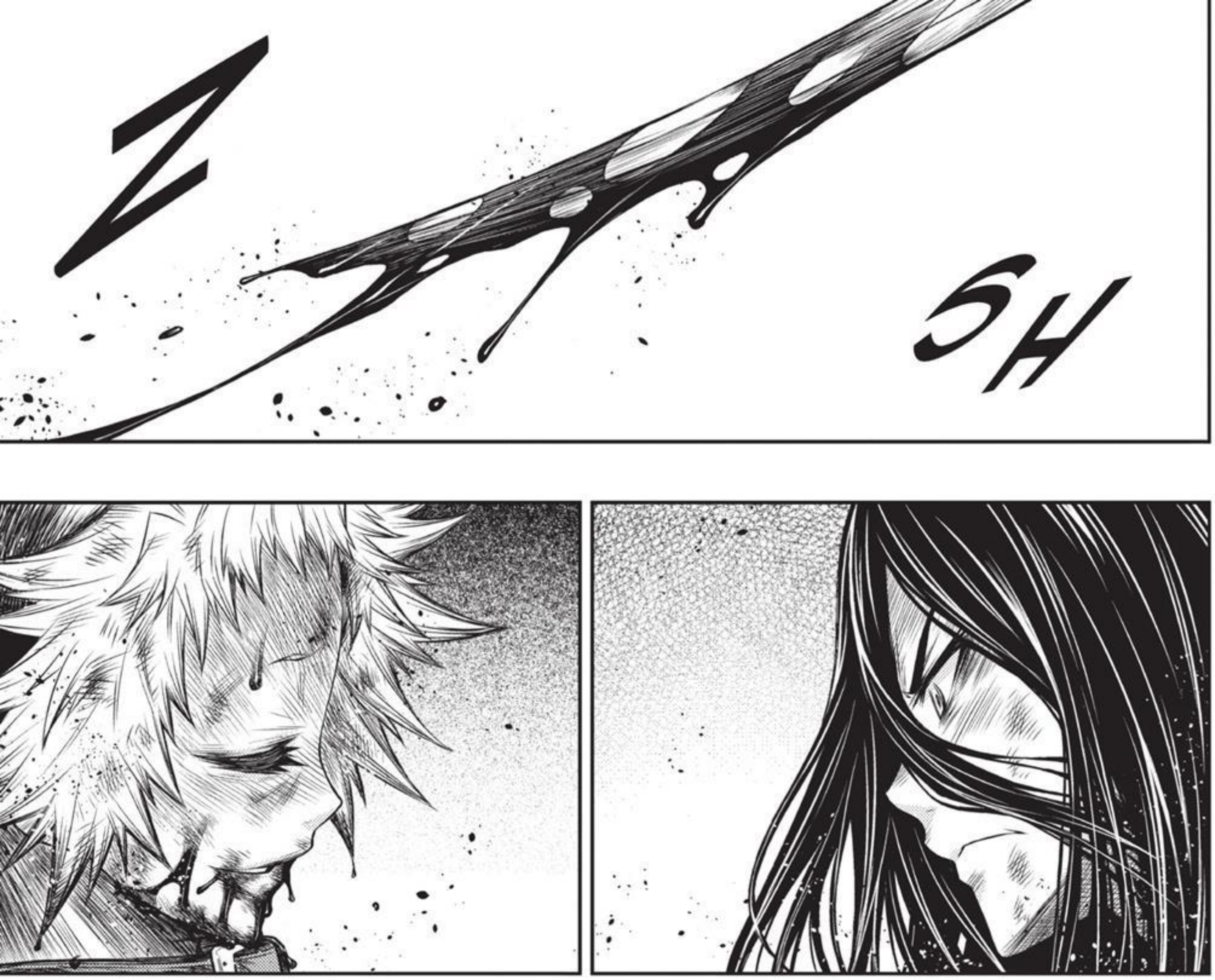
THE MASTER KILLED THE DYING WOMAN— THE RIGHT CHOICE CARRIED OUT THE RIGHT WAY.

...SHE WAS THE FIRST TO LOSE AND STILL GET HER WISH.

IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE ZODIAC WAR...

First decide, then do.

She would likely never
understand what was
right or what purpose
fighting held,
but at that moment,
she decided to start
living again.
She decided to reexamine
the thoughts she had
excised from her mind.
On that day, she had
found someone to
inspire her—
someone who had
built a mighty
wall that closed
off her previously
unhindered life.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

OX, RABBIT, MONKEY

UNFAMILIAR EXPERIENCES, ALL OF THEM.

FLEEING COMBAT... CRYING OUT.

I HAVEN'T BEEN MYSELF— CARVING UP RABBIT'S CORPSE, CONSEQUENCES BE DAMNED...

MAYBE THAT PERSON I MET WASN'T JUST ANY GIRL.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...

IS IT BECAUSE I SAW SOMETHING IN **TIGER** THAT REMINDED ME OF THAT GIRL I MET ON THE BATTLEFIELD?

FIRST, DECIDE TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

THEN, DO IT.

AND SO...

I GAVE HER MY SINCERE ANSWER.

THEY WERE HONEST QUESTIONS AND WERE REFRESHINGLY UNEXPECTED. QUESTIONS I'D NEVER THOUGHT TO ASK MYSELF.

"HOW DO YOU DO EVERYTHING SO RIGHT?"

"HOW CAN I DO WHAT'S RIGHT?"

...I FELT AS IF I'D HAD AN AWAKENING.

BY GIVING FORM TO MY CREED AND SAYING IT ALOUD...

...I WOULD'VE LIKED TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION AND SHARE ONE WITH HER.

...IF IT WERE WITH HER...

EVEN THOUGH I NEVER DRINK...

USAGI, FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT—

FW

P

IN A WAY, DEATH IS SUPPOSED TO BE A SALVATION FOR US WARRIORS.

...WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.

BUT I SUPPOSE A NECRO-MANTICIST ...

HE'S MADE A PUPPET OUT OF HIS OWN CORPSE.

...HE STILL SEEKS VICTORY.

IN DEATH ...

HE'S STILL FIGHT-ING.

EVEN DEAD ...

BE

ED

THIS CONTEST HAS ENTERED THE FINAL STAGE.

TIGER IS DEAD ...

...COL-LECTING ALL 12 JEWELS.

THE ONLY CONDITION FOR WINNING IS...

TAP

WINNING FIGHTER RA G

I'D BEEN THINKING OF THE CONTEST IN TERMS OF BEING THE SOLE SURVIVOR.

...WHO HAS REFUSED TO QUIT EVEN AFTER OX AND TIGER SHREDDED HIM APART.

THE BIG UNKNOWN IS THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT...

...EVEN A DEAD WARRIOR CAN COUNT AS THE WINNER!!

BUT NOW I REALIZE... AS LONG AS THE WINNING CONDITION IS MET...

DO!

RANK FIRST RABBIT

AH

AND WHAT IS HE DOING?

WHAT HAS HE DECIDED TO DO?

WHAT WISH COULD A PERSON WANT SO BADLY AS TO BE WILLING TO DIE FOR IT?

BUT WHY IS HE WILLING TO GO THIS FAR?

IF I REMOVE ALL EMOTION FROM THE EQUATION, ALL OF HIS ACTIONS HAVE AN EXPLANATION.

I CAN SEE RABBIT'S LOGIC.

IF WE COULDN'T REACH A MUTUAL UNDER-STANDING WHEN HE WAS ALIVE, WE SURELY CAN'T NOW THAT HE'S DEAD.

I DON'T THINK THIS IS A MYSTERY I'LL EVER SOLVE.

FF

GIVE HIM A PROPER FUNERAL.

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO...

DU

N

SHFF

!!

I NEED FIRE. A GAS STATION MIGHT BE MY BEST BET.

WHAT ?!

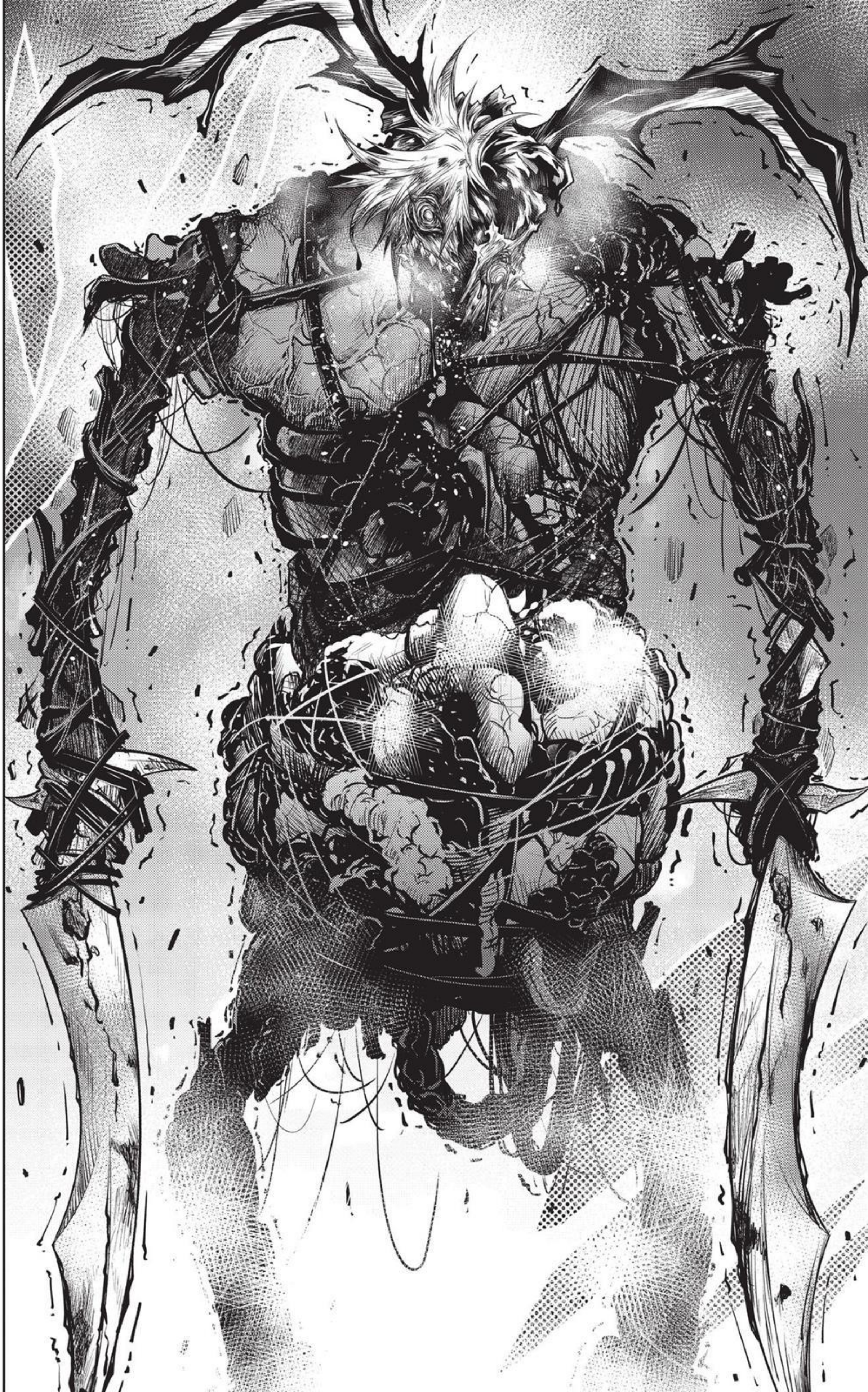
...

SKRCH

SKRCH

SHFF

SHFF



...

KREEK

KREEK

HE REASSEMBLED HIMSELF FROM ALL THOSE PIECES.

KREEK

KREEK

STARE

KRAK

KREEK

AND NOW HE'S COME FOR ME.

GLARE

GLARE

GLARE

HE ISN'T EVEN A **ZOMBIE** ANYMORE!

HA

A

A

HE'S

...

HELLO

...AN ABOMI-NATION!

SH

F

RABBIT DOESN'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO FLY, NOR DOES HE HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH SLITHERING ALONG THE GROUND.

EARTH'S GUIDANCE

HEAVEN'S HOLDING

UNLIKE THE TATSUMI BROTHERS, WITH THEIR UNIQUE FIGHTING STYLES...

WELL...

NORMAL IS HARDLY THE RIGHT WORD TO DESCRIBE THAT.

...HE MUST HAVE REASONED THAT THE FASTEST WAY TO CATCH OX...

...WOULD BE TO RE-CONSTRUCT HIMSELF AND WALK LIKE NORMAL...

KREE

KREE

KREE

KREE

AFTER OX CHOPPED HIM INTO PIECES...

GU

WI

OO

UZ

JI-JAA

HOF

RMB

RMB

RMB

BUT!

SUCH STRENGTH! THE FULL POWER OF THE UNDEAD, UNLEASHED IN A SINGLE ATTACK...

I'VE BEEN TOO FIXATED ON MY FIGHT WITH SNAKE.

AND HIS MOVEMENTS ARE FAIRLY PREDICTABLE.

KREE

KREE

HE'S SLOW.

KREEK

IN THAT CASE ...!

...BEING CHOPPED TO PIECES MIGHT NOT GIVE IT THE ADVANTAGE.

DEPENDING ON THE ZOMBIE'S FIGHTING STYLE...

SHF

THOOM

SHF

I'LL USE MY SABER AGAIN...

...AND I'LL CARVE HIM UP INTO EVEN SMALLER PIECES.

SHIN

SHIN





MONKEY ?!

THAT'S ...

OW

URK ...

In death,
Rabbit sought victory.

REAL NAME, EIJI KASHII

USHII, THE FIGHTER OF THE OX.

BORN ON FEBRUARY 2. HE'S 181 CENTIMETERS TALLS AND WEIGHS 72 KILOGRAMS.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

RAT, OX, RABBIT, MONKEY

HE WAS FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN HE HAD HIS FIRST BATTLE.

HIS NICKNAME IS THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.

AND EVEN THEN, HE KILLED EVERY ENEMY HE FACED.

FWP

SO THIS IS WHAT A BATTLE-FIELD IS LIKE...

...

HIS CLAIM TO THE TITLE WAS ABSO-LUTE...

FROM THE START, PEOPLE CALLED HIM A NATURAL.

..AND UN-BROKEN.

DO

BUT NOW ...

GIN

O

GWL

URK!

ALIVE, **MONKEY** WAS AMONG THE TOP CONTEND-ERS.

...TO TAKE **OX** BY SUR-PRISE.

THIS WAS **RABBIT'S** PLAN...

GR

P

P

P

BUT AS A **ZOMBIE**, SHE'S TRAN-SCENDED ANY MENTAL OR PHYSICAL LIMITS.

...AS PARTS FOR A GROTESQUE JACK-IN-THE-BOX.

HE USED **MONKEY** AND HIS OWN CHOPPED-UP BODY ...

ZLSH

ZLSH

ZLSH

ZLSH

ZLSH

ZLSH

A CORPSE HIDING INSIDE OF A CORPSE.

I FAILED TO NOTICE HE WAS **BIGGER** THAN HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN.

I WAS DISTRACTED BY THAT GRUESOME MONSTER.

HOW COULD I NOT HAVE AT LEAST SUSPECTED THE POSSIBILITY?

HOW COULD I MAKE SUCH A MISTAKE?

...

...THE MOMENT IT TURNED OUT TO BE **MONKEY** INSIDE, IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.

EVEN HAD I SUS-PECTED IT...

NO MATTER.

...

WHAT'S THAT?

A PACIFIST WARRIOR?

THOSE TAKE TOO MUCH TIME.

CEASE-FIRES...

APPARENTLY, HER EFFORTS HAVE ENDED MANY WARS.

CEASE-FIRE NEGOTIA-TIONS AND PEACE TREATIES ARE LIKE WEAPONS TO HER.

...WHAT MATTERS IS HOW **SWIFTLY** YOU CAN PUT AN END TO IT.

WHEN IT COMES TO **STOPPING** WAR...

...

YOU GO INTO BATTLE KNOWING YOU'RE GOING TO WIN.

HA HA. THAT MIGHT WORK FOR A FIGHTER OF **YOUR** LEVEL.

...

WARS AREN'T SO SIMPLE.

BUT WARS...

I NEVER THINK ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF EACH WAR.

BUT ME— I ONLY ACT AS A SINGLE, SIMPLE SOLDIER.

I SUPPOSE SOME FIGHTERS CAN LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE.

THAT'S NOT THE TYPICAL LOOK YOU GET WHEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ANOTHER FIGHTER.

WELL, THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T SEE EVERY DAY.

SHE SOUNDS LIKE AN INTERESTING WARRIOR.

I SEE...

IT'S...

WHAT? YOU WANT TO KNOW HER NAME?

SHARYŪ, THE FIGHTER OF THE MONKEY.

GOOO

SHARYŪ.

SHE'S NOT TWISTING MY ARMS.

SHE DOESN'T HAVE ME IN ANY KIND OF LOCK OR HOLD.

SHE'S JUST USING HER RAW STRENGTH.

BUT...

GRP

GRP

GRP

GRP

IT'S SO HEAVY!

WHY DOESN'T SHE?

WITH THAT MUCH POWER, SHE COULD **FLATTEN** HIS LIMBS IF SHE FELT LIKE IT.

GW

O

O

O

O

RABBIT MEANS TO KILL ME HIMSELF.

HE WANTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF MY BODY...

...WITH AS LITTLE DAMAGE DONE AS POSSIBLE.

I'LL BE STRIPPED OF CONSCIOUSNESS, FREE WILL AND CREED.

I'LL BE FORCED TO KEEP ON BATTLING AT HIS COMMAND.

IT WOULDN'T BE THAT MUCH DIFFERENT THAN MY LIFE NOW.

I'D STILL BE A SIMPLE SOLDIER ...

...JUST DEAD INSTEAD OF ALIVE.

BUT I WOULD NO LONGER BE DOING RIGHT THINGS.

AND I DON'T WANT THAT.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO NOW?

TO KILL MYSELF? BITE THROUGH MY TONGUE LIKE RABBIT DID?

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DECIDE ...

AND DO IT.

GRIP

GRIP

HORSE.

DRAGON.

TIGER.

BOAR.

SNAKE.

THIS ZODIAC WAR IS AS GOOD AS OVER.

MONKEY.

CHICKEN.

WAIT... THERE SHOULD BE ONE MORE FIGHTER.

RABBIT.

DOG.

YES, I REMEM-BER NOW...

SHEEP.



I KILL *INEXORABLY.*

I AM *NEZUMI,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *RAT.*

YAWN ...

THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT...

THE LAST REMAINING SURVIVOR ...

...

THERE'S NOTHING HE CAN CONCEIVABLY DO TO CHANGE IT.

THE BATTLE IS ALL BUT FINISHED.

WHY HAS HE COME HERE?

THAT'S WHO'S LEFT.

THE FIGHTER... OF THE RAT...?!

...

...BACK AT THE BEGIN-NING.

HE'S THAT KID WHO LOOKED HALF-ASLEEP...

LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT TOO LATE.

IT TOOK ME LONGER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD...

...TO FIND *SHEEP'S* BODY.

...

HIS *GRENADE*. THE *SHŪKAIOKURI*— HIDEOUS BURIAL.

WELL, TECHNICALLY, IT WASN'T HIS *BODY* I WAS AFTER. IT WAS *THIS*.

!!

The boy had shown
up as if to save Ox from
certain death, but surely
that wasn't the case.
No one—save for the
drunken Tiger—would be
so foolish as to come
to the rescue of the
Natural-Born Slayer.

GNO

HIDEOUS BURIAL.

THEY'RE GRENADES— THE SHŪKAI-OKURI.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

RAT, OX, RABBIT, MONKEY

BUT WHERE DID HE GET THEM?!

THERE'S NO BETTER WEAPON FOR DESTROYING THE UNDEAD.

HAND GRENADES ...?

...

"...I'VE COME PREPARED TO UTILIZE SOME HIGH EXPLOSIVES."

"TO BE PERFECTLY CANDID ..."

SHEEP—AN ARMS DEALER AS WELL AS A FIGHTER—DEVELOPED THESE HAND GRENADES AS HIS GREATEST WEAPON.

HIDEOUS BURIAL.

"...TO UTILIZE SOME HIGH EXPLO-SIVES."

...TO PROTECT EVERYONE FROM THESE GRENADES.

MONKEY DESTROYED THE HIGH-RISE AT THE START...

...COULD HAVE DESTROYED THAT BUILDING TEN TIMES OVER.

THIS ONE GRENADE ALONE ...

HE WASN'T KIDDING.

I NEED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

I NEED TO DRAW **RABBIT'S** ATTENTION.

SHE WON'T MOVE FROM THAT SPOT UNTIL **RABBIT** KILLS **OX.**

I KNEW SHE WOULDN'T.

MONKEY ISN'T REACTING TO THE SIGHT OF THE GRENADES NOW.

KRAK

TNT

TCH

GW

SHIN

K

HUNDRED PATHS OF NEZUMI...

4K

!!

STAND STILL.

DODGE LEFT.

DODGE RIGHT.

...

KL

NK

STAND STILL.

SH

NK

SH

I'M GLAD I DECIDED TO PICK IT UP EARLIER.

THAT METAL PLATE CAME IN HANDY.

TR

NK

HE'S FAST.

I CAN SEE HOW HE'S SURVIVED THIS LONG.

SH

F

...WILL GIVE YOU ANY PEACE OF MIND, BUT...

I'M NOT SURE THAT MY SAYING THIS...

...

...BECAUSE *TIGER* KILLED *SHEEP*.

...I WAS ONLY ABLE TO BRING THESE GRENADES HERE...

NOW...

DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL WORDS?

EVERYTHING THAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN IS THANKS TO *YOUR ALLY'S* ACCOMPLISH-MENTS.

TIGER...

...

JUST DO IT.

NO.

...THAN LET RABBIT WALK FREE.

...I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT I'D RATHER HAVE HIM WIN...

...OR EVEN IF HE'S JUST SOME COWARD ...

EVEN IF THIS BOY IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST VILLAIN...


MONKEY
...


...AND
ME...


THREE CORPSES ROAMING FROM BATTLE-FIELD TO BATTLE-FIELD.
...AND RABBIT TO-GETHER.

I CAN IMAGINE NO WORSE FUTURE.

CREATING ZOMBIES EN MASSE.

"THEN DO IT."

"DECIDE TO DO THE RIGHT THING."

SPEND *YOUR* LIFE DOING WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS RIGHT.

BOY.

TO ME, THIS IS WHAT'S RIGHT.

...

I JUST *KILL.*

I AM *USHII,* THE FIGHTER OF THE *OX.*

...

SH

GOT IT.

BEEP

KLIK

KLNK

KLNK

KLNK

KLNK

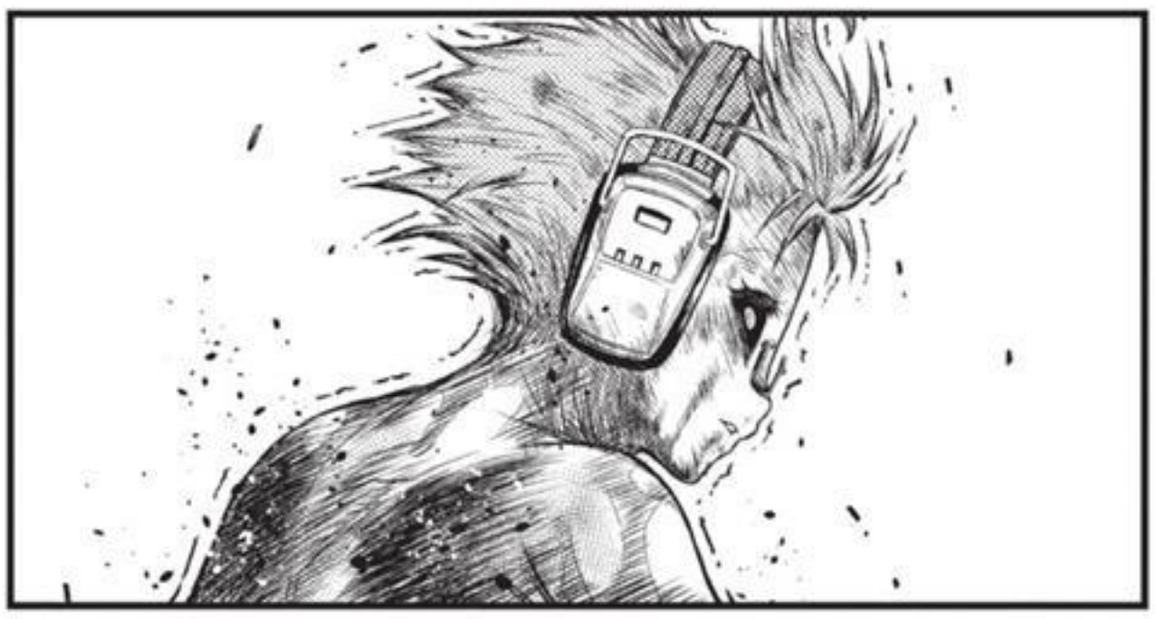
"IF I DIE...

...AND I FALL UNDER THE NECRO-MANTICIST'S CONTROL..."

"PLEASE KILL ME."

I KEPT MY PROMISE ...

SHARYŪ.







IF SO, I DON'T MIND.

IS THAT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME THEN?

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THEY SAY THAT WHEN THE ZODIAC WAS FIRST CREATED ...

... AND ...

THIS BOY TRIED TO GIVE ME PEACE OF MIND...

... SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, IT WORKED.

...THE RAT CLAIMED THE FIRST SPOT BY HITCHING A RIDE ON THE OX.

I DON'T REGRET CONCEDING TO HIM.

I DON'T CARE IF I WIN THE ZODIAC WAR ANYMORE.

WHAT WILL HE WISH FOR?

SSOOH

SSOOH

SSOOH

...THAT I'VE MET THAT KID...

AND WHY DO I GET THE FEEL-ING...

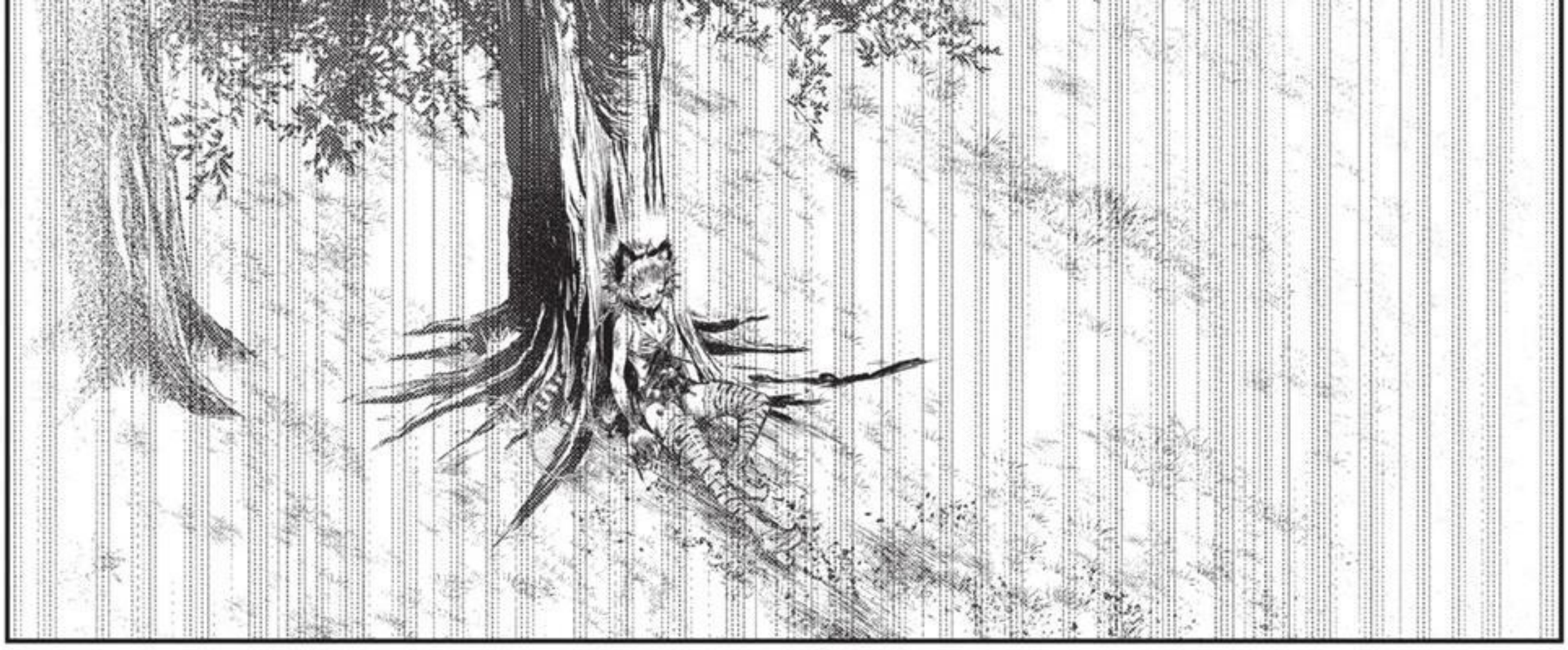
WOBBL

...SOME-WHERE BEFORE?

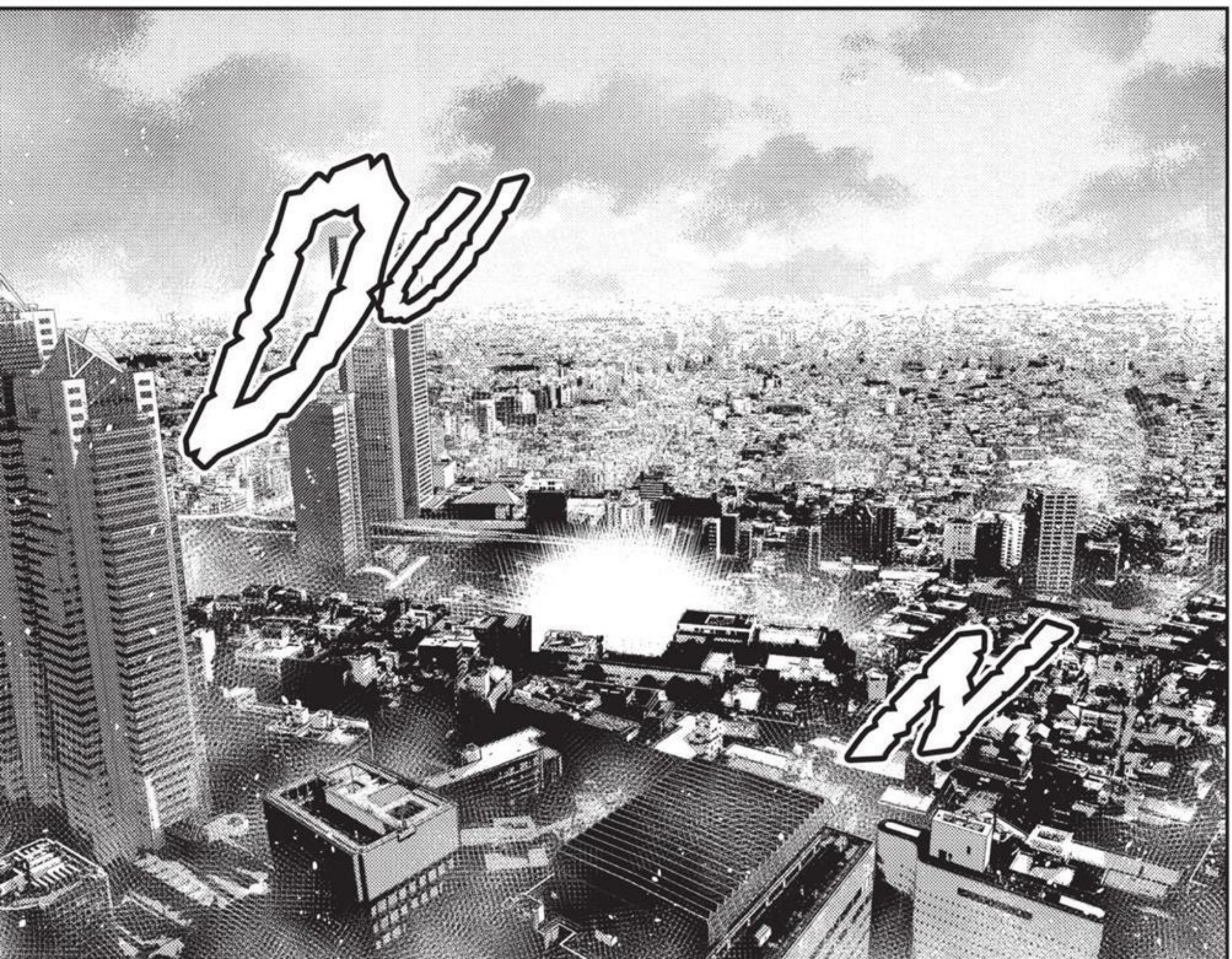
DRG

DRG

DRG






10



The former arms dealer's
implied threat on the
observation deck had
been no lie or exaggeration.
With far more destructive
power than seemed possible
from objects that fit in the
palm of a hand, the explosion
disintegrated Monkey, Rabbit,
and Ox, and even the
nearby Tiger, along with
everything else in the area.
All that remained were
the eleven murky-black
jewels they had once held.

Added to the one
carried by Rat,
who had taken shelter
back in the sewers,
that made twelve.

The Twelfth Zodiac War
had ended.

DU

NEZUMI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RAT

BORN ON MARCH 3. HE'S 170 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WEIGHS 55 KILOGRAMS.

REAL NAME, TSUGI-YOSHI SUMINO.

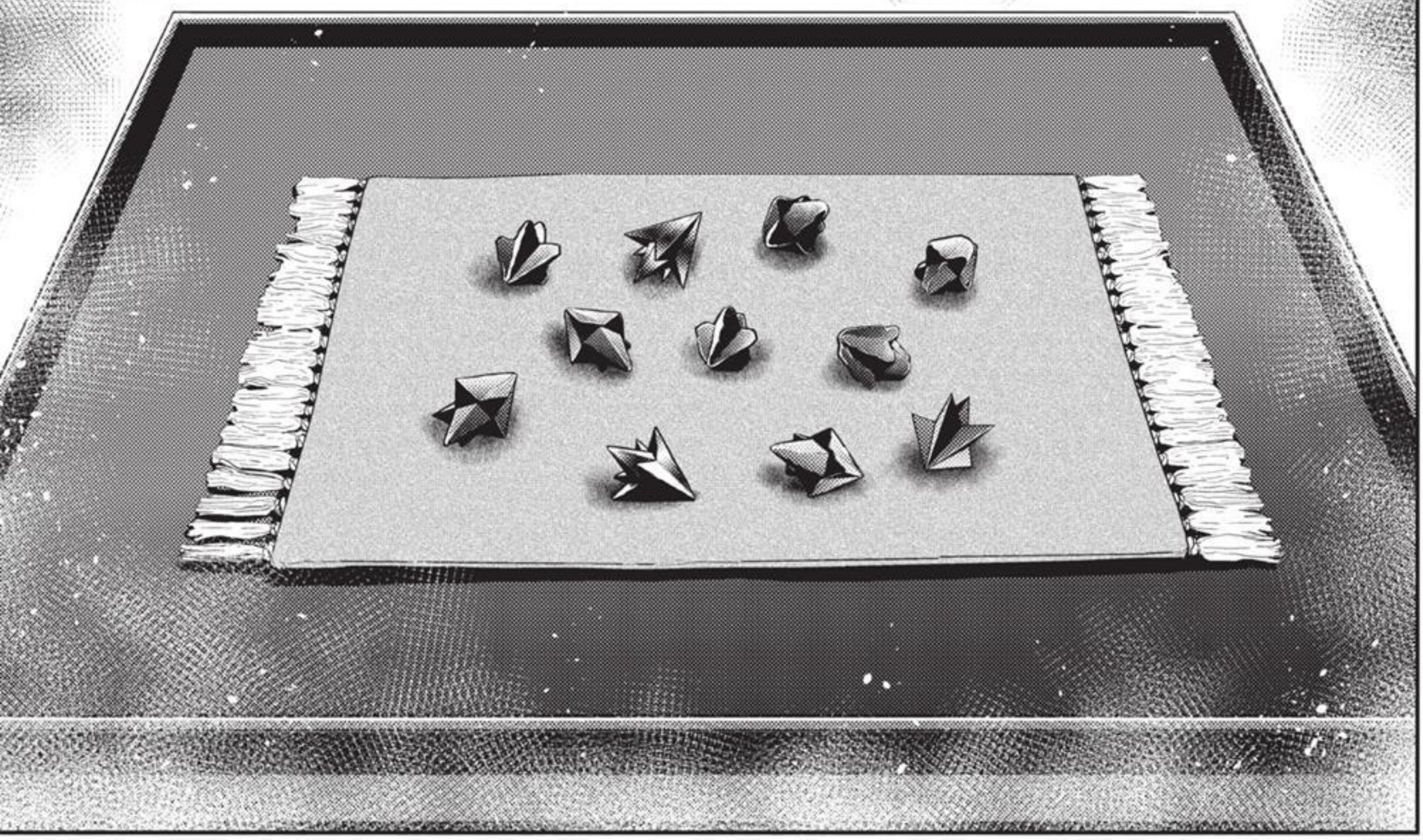
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT | RAT

HE'S A FIGHTER AND A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

AND...

...OF THE TWELFTH ZODIAC WAR.

...THE WINNER...









GN

WURL

...CLAP YOUR HANDS!

EVERY-BODY...

CONGRATU-LATIONS, FIGHTER *NEZUMI!*

YOU ARE THE *WINNER* OF THE *TWELFTH* ZODIAC WAR.

KL AP KL AP KL AP KL AP KL AP KL AP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

KLAP

...

YOUR JEWEL WILL DISSOLVE IN YOUR STOMACH WITHOUT ANY TRACE OR HARMFUL EFFECTS.

WORRY NO MORE— WE'VE NEUTRALIZED THE POISON.

AFTER ALL, THAT WAS SUCH A *BRILLIANT* VICTORY...

NOT YET. YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED JUST A LITTLE LONGER.

CAN I GO NOW?

THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

SHUF

AN INTER-VIEW, HUH?

...

FOR *POSTERITY'S SAKE.* I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.

WE'D LIKE TO CONDUCT A SHORT *INTERVIEW.*

FEELS MORE LIKE AN INTERRO-GATION.

THE HUNDRED PATHS OF NEZUMI— ACTIVATE!

RAT'S POWER ALLOWS HIM TO TAMPER WITH THE REALM OF PROBABILITY BY LIVING OUT A HUNDRED DIFFERENT CHOICES AT ONCE.

!!

SH

① REFUSE.

F

FIGHTER *NEZUMI* ?

IN ANY CASE...

...I'M *TIRED*.

I'M JUST GOING TO LEAVE. IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY.

FWUMP

TH

U

!!

SH

F

② "I DON'T WANT TO."

BOOM

KT

CH

SPRICH

③ "PLEASE, LET ME GO HOME."

F

7
"I WON'T DO IT."

22
"GOOD-BYE."

13
"I'D RATHER NOT."

33
"BYE-BYE."

29
"YOU CAN'T MAKE ME."

43
"NO!"

40
"I REALLY DON'T WANT TO."

39
"C'MON, NO."

49
IGNORE.

46
"I SAID NO!!"

SH

NK

THM

THM

THM

THM

THM

THM

FT

MP

RATAT

TATATATATATAT

BO

OOM

LOOKS LIKE I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUBMIT TO HIS QUESTIONS.

EVEN WORSE— IN 40 OF THEM, I GET KILLED.

I TRIED REFUSING A HUNDRED DIFFERENT WAYS, AND THEY ALL FAILED...

...A 60 PERCENT SURVIVAL RATE IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

YAWN

WELL, COMPARED TO THE ZODIAC WAR, WHERE I GOT KILLED 99 TIMES OUT OF 100...

...WE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT ANYTHING ABOUT THEM.

DUE TO MERELY OBSERVING YOU ON THE OUTSIDE...

IF YOU'LL BE SO KIND.

I'M AFRAID WE NEED TO HEAR THE DETAILS FROM YOU.

FIRST, I'D LIKE YOU TO EXPLAIN YOUR ACTIONS DURING THE WAR.

SO... WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

HUN-
DRED
PATHS!

...BUT I CAN TELL YOU'RE PATRONIZING ME.

YOU ACT POLITE ON THE SURFACE...

FW

SH

1
PUNCH HIM.

SLSH

SLSH

SLSH

GUESS I'LL GO WITH THE OTHER CHOICE THEN.

YEAH, I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED. I GOT KILLED SO FAST I COULDN'T EVEN SEE WHAT KILLED ME.

I JUST DID WHAT I ALWAYS DO.

I USED THE *HUNDRED PATHS OF NEZUMI...*

②
ANSWER OBEDI-ENTLY.

...AND I TRIED A *HUNDRED DIFFERENT STRATEGIES AT ONCE.*

I GOT *LUCKY*, THAT'S ALL.

ONE SIMPLY *HAPPENED TO WORK.*

KL
ROUTE SELECT-ED.
IK

...

I SEE, I SEE.

THEY CAN'T TURN LEFT AND RIGHT AT THE SAME TIME.

THEY ONLY GET TO TAKE *ONE COURSE OF ACTION.*

...OR EVEN A *CORPSE.*

...BE THEY *HERO* OR *PRODIGY* ...

NO MATTER HOW *SUPERIOR THE FIGHTER* ...

YOU *CAN.*

FW

SK

BUT *YOU,* FIGHTER *NEZUMI...*

BUT NOW THAT THE BATTLE IS OVER, IT'S CLEAR NO ONE ELSE *CAME EVEN CLOSE* TO WINNING.

THIS *ZODIAC WAR* WAS GRACED WITH COMPETITORS WHO POSSESSED A VARIETY OF UNUSUAL TALENTS.

...

I'M SO UNBELIEV-ABLY **TIRED** RIGHT NOW.

I FEEL LIKE MY MIND IS BEING CHIPPED AWAY.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO CARRY OUT A HUNDRED DIFFERENT BATTLES AT ONCE?

...

THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.

BEING ABLE TO TEST OUT A HUNDRED FORKED PATHS...

...MIGHT SEEM A BIT LIKE CHEAT-ING...

...BUT REALLY, ALL IT DOES IS **SHOW ME HOW POWER-LESS** I AM.

PRAISE MY POWER ALL YOU WANT...

BUT IN **REALITY** ...

MY VICTORY CAN SEEM LIKE A PRODUCT OF EFFORT AND PER-SEVERANCE.

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, I DIED 99 TIMES.

...BUT MOST ROUTES END UP BEING LARGELY SIMILAR.

IT WOULD BE MORE TRUE TO SAY...

...I LIVED 100 TIMES AND DIED 99 OF THEM.

WHAT-EVER HAP-PENED IN THIS WAR...

...I DON'T FEEL LIKE I WON AT ALL.

IF I DIED 99 OUT OF 100 TIMES, THAT WAS **99 LOSSES** TO **ONE WIN.**

I ERASED MY DEATHS ALONG WITH THE PATHS THAT CONTAINED THEM, BUT THEY REMAIN IN MY MEMORY.

A PITIFUL DEFEAT, IF ANY-THING.

...AND EVERY-ONE ELSE DIED ONLY ONCE.

AFTER ALL, I DIED 99 TIMES...

GO HOME AND HAVE A GOOD REST.

TAP

TAP

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. I HAVE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS.

...PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH ME. I AM AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

NOD

NOD

WHENEVER YOU DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO SPEND YOUR SINGLE WISH...

...I MIGHT JUST WISH TO GO TO SLEEP.

WOBBL

WOBBL

IF I MADE A WISH NOW...

BUT A WISH LIKE THAT WOULD JUST BE A WASTE.

RATTL

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS BATTLE HAD ANY GREAT MEANING.

...I'LL TAKE MY TIME THINKING IT OVER.

AS LONG AS THERE'S NO RUSH ...

YEAH.

WIN

YA

A

URK

DU

N

CONGRATU-LATIONS, FIGHTER *NEZUMI*.

I'VE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO TAKE YOU BACK HOME.

MY NAME IS *NAVI*.

THE RE-PORTER GUY...

OH, IT'S YOU.

BUT...

OH. SURE, THANKS.

I'm tired, anyway.

!!

HOW MANY OF YOU ARE THERE?

...THANKS TO MY POWER.

OF COURSE I ONLY REALIZED IT...

03

...IN DIFFERENT PLACES AT THE SAME TIME.

02

...BUT I ALSO SAW SEVERAL OF YOU...

01

I'M GUESSING THAT WAS YOU AT THE START...

THE TRUTH IS, THAT'S *MY POWER.*

UM, WELL... THOSE WERE ALL ME.

...

!!

THAT MUST BE WHY THEY ASSIGNED YOU AS THE REPORTER.

I SEE ...

...

I WAS ABLE TO GET PLENTY OF GREAT FOOTAGE.

YES.

LIKE WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE WISHED FOR... RIGHT?

YOU MUST HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT THE OTHER FIGHTERS.

EXPERI-ENCING A HUNDRED DIFFERENT FUTURES AT THE SAME TIME— THAT'S INCREDI-BLE.

BUT REALLY, FIGHTER ***NEZUMI***, YOUR POWER IS SOMETHING ELSE.

I GUESS I COULD TALK A LITTLE MORE.

It doesn't feel like it's safe to sleep yet.

BUT MAYBE IT'LL KEEP ME AWAKE.

I DON'T REALLY FEEL LIKE ANY MORE QUES-TIONS...

OH, ER...

IT'S NOT ALL THAT GREAT, REALLY.

...THEY HAD WISHES TOO...

THE OTHER FIGHT-ERS...

Rat killed
more than
any other
fighter—
he had killed
entire worlds
by wiping
them from
existence.

TP TP TP TP TP

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE TWELVE

NO WONDER HE'S CALLED THE NATURAL-BORN SLAYER.

HUFF

I CAN'T POSSIBLY BEAT HIM.

HUFF

HUFF

TP

HUFF

TP

TP

TP

SHU

F

!!

WOOF

KZ

VROOOM

PRETTY MUCH.

...

AND YOU TEAMED UP AFTER THAT?

SO THAT'S HOW YOU CAME ACROSS *BOAR.*

SHE WAS FULL OF HERSELF, BUT...

YAAAAWN

...EVEN SHE RECOGNIZED THE *NATURAL-BORN SLAYER*...

...WAS NOT SOMEONE SHE WANTED TO TAKE ON ALONE.

NEZUMI, WINNER OF THE TWELFTH ZODIAC WAR

I NEVER TALK ABOUT THE ALTERNATE PATHS I ERASE...

*BUT I CAN MAKE AN EXCEPTION— I'LL JUST **ERASE THIS** PATH LATER.*

MURR

MURR

*INŌNO-SHISHI, THE FIGHTER OF THE **BOAR**.*

DAUGHTER OF THE PREVIOUS WINNER.

SHE HAD A WISH, AS WE ALL DID.

BEFITTING THE HEIRESS OF A DISTIN-GUISHED FAMILY.

I WANT TO LOVE AND BE LOVED *BY EVERY ATTRACTIVE MAN ON EARTH!!*

WHY, *A MALE HAREM,* OF COURSE!

FWI

SHA

"I WISH FOR LOVE."

INŌNO-SHISHI, THE FIGHTER OF THE *BOAR...*

...OX KILLED US ANYWAY.

WELL, IN THE END...

I DIDN'T GET TO KNOW HER THAT WELL.

MAYBE.

YAWN

...I WONDER IF SHE FELT LIKE HER LIFE CONTAINED ONLY INSINCERE LOVE.

IF THAT'S WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE WISHED FOR...

SHUT UP!

THAT'S JUST HOW THINGS HAPPENED.

AN ADOPTED DAUGHTER ?

SO THE *DOG* TOOK IN A STRAY?

BUT ANOTHER FIGHTER HAD SOMEONE IN HIS LIFE.

HE LOVED AND WAS LOVED BACK.

BOTH *BEFORE* DELIVERY, AND *AFTER*.

...AND I MAKE SURE THEY'RE CARED FOR.

I TRAFFIC CHILDREN...

...I RISKED MY LIFE TO TAKE HER BACK.

...TO SOME SICK PEDO-PHILE...

WHEN I FOUND OUT I'D DELIVERED *MERCHAN-DISE*...

I THOUGHT ABOUT GIVING HER TO AN ORPHANAGE OR SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT, BUT...

THEY WERE LONG DEAD.

WHEN YOU SAY "MERCHAN-DISE," YOU MEAN A CHILD, RIGHT?

WHY NOT RETURN HER TO HER PARENTS?

...

SW F

GRP

TUG

BEING NEEDED.

I HAVE SOMEONE WHO NEEDS ME NOW, AND IT'S NOT SO BAD, YOU KNOW...

BUT IN THE END, I'M GLAD I DID.

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BECOME A SINGLE DAD.

I NEED TO WIN TOMOR-ROW, AND THE NEXT DAY.

AND NOT JUST THIS ONE.

AND NEXT *YEAR*, AND THE YEAR AFTER THAT!

GRP

I MUST WIN THIS FIGHT SO THAT I CAN AFFORD TO RAISE HER.

GRP

GRP

...

GLA

"I WISH TO WIN."

DO-TSUKU, THE FIGHTER OF THE DOG.

RE

F

WP

HE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO WIN.

THAT HALF-NAKED CHICK WAS TOO...

I EVEN GOT HIM TO GIVE ME A DOPING BOOST FIRST.

THAT WORKED OUT NICELY.

NEZUMI, ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T REGRET TURNING DOWN HIS OFFER? IT'S QUITE A BOOST.

UM... NO.

I-I'M GOOD.

BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE?

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT STUFF WILL DO TO YOU.

...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

BESIDES, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN WIN WITHOUT IT.

WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR SO BADLY...

...THAT YOU'RE WILLING TO GO THAT FAR TO GET IT?

...

COULD YOU PICK ONE FOR ME, NEZUMI?

WHAT?!

ERM... UM...

GOSH, I DON'T KNOW— THERE'S SO MUCH TO WISH FOR!

WHAT? WHO, ME?!

...

"I WISH FOR MY-SELF."

NIWA-TORI, THE FIGHTER OF THE CHICKEN.

DID YOU EVER FIND OUT WHAT HER SUREFIRE PLAN FOR VICTORY WAS?

AND WHAT ABOUT *MON-KEY?*

..AND THEN STABBED ME FROM BEHIND WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.

AFTER THAT, SHE USED ME TO HER ADVANTAGE...

I DUNNO... MAYBE SHE WAS ONLY BLUFFING, AFTER ALL.

ACROSS ALL MY PATHS, I NEVER LEARNED HER PLAN. I ONLY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED UP UNTIL I DIED.

...

I HAVE A PLAN THAT CAN SAVE ALL OF US!

MONKEY ...

IF SHE WON...

...SHE MIGHT HAVE INTENDED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE ORGANIZERS.

I CAN IMAGINE THAT SHE KNEW SOME OF WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE ZODIAC WAR.

YOU CAN'T SAY THAT FOR SURE.

NOT NECES-SARILY.

...

WHAT'S BEHIND THE ZODIAC WAR?

AH! I'M SORRY, I SAID TOO MUCH.

PLEASE, FORGET I EVER SAID ANYTHING!!

...

...

I GUESS IT DOESN'T MATTER.

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN KNOW WHAT GOES ON IN A HERO'S HEAD, BUT...

...I PRAY THAT IN AT LEAST ONE OF MY FAILED ROUTES...

...SHE MANAGED TO SUCCEED WITH HER PLAN FOR PEACE.

...IF SHE DIED AND FELL UNDER THE NECRO-MANTICIST'S CONTROL.

SHE ASKED ME TO DESTROY HER WITH *SHEEP'S* GRE-NADES...

I ONLY MANAGED TO WIN BECAUSE OF HER.

OF COURSE, IF THERE WAS SUCH A ROUTE...

...I'VE ALREADY **ERASED** IT FROM EXISTENCE.

REALLY ?

AND SHE WAS RIGHT.

BUT I DON'T THINK I COULD STOP THEM IF I WAS DEAD.

THOSE WEAPONS AREN'T A THREAT TO ME WHILE I'M ALIVE.

THE HIGH EXPLOSIVES **SHEEP** MENTIONED...

"I WISH FOR PEACE."

SHARYŪ, THE FIGHTER OF THE **MONKEY**.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'D GO SO FAR AS TO CALL IT PREDICTABLE, BUT IT WASN'T SURPRISING.

AS FOR *SHEEP'S* WISH...

...

ONCE YOU GET TO MY AGE...

...YOU REALIZE WHAT A *TREASURE* YOUTH IS.

ETERNAL LIFE!

"I WISH FOR TIME."

HITSUJII, THE FIGHTER OF THE SHEEP.

AND HAPPINESS FOR MY GRAND-DAUGHTER.

SKREE

WHAT ?!

YOU AND *RABBIT* ?!

IN THE HUNDRED PATHS...

...THERE WAS ONE WHERE *RABBIT* AND I *JOINED FORCES.*

THE SINISTER, EVIL NECRO-MANTICIST HIMSELF.

YES, HIM.

IT HAPPENED IN AN ABANDONED SUPER-MARKET...

!!

WHOA ...

SO MANY CHEESES I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE ...

HOW IS CHEESE SO GOOD?

NO TWO CHEESES TASTE EXACTLY THE SAME...

SHV

NOM

NOM

R

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K

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LP

THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT!

...

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E

WOULD YOU...

...LIKE SOME CHEESE ...?

...

RABBIT HAD NEVER HAD A FRIEND TO SHARE FOOD WITH.

APPAR-ENTLY...

I NEVER IMAGINED WE WOULD CONNECT LIKE THAT.

...DONE THIS BEFORE.

I'VE NEVER ...

THIS IS FUN.

...AND I GOT US KILLED BY HORSE.

IN THE END, I SCREWED UP...

FOR A WHILE, I THOUGHT WE HAD A CHANCE, BUT...

THEN

"I WISH FOR FRIENDS."

USAGI, THE FIGHTER OF THE RABBIT.

BUT THAT ROUTE LEFT A VIVID IMPRESSION.

I DON'T RETAIN A PERFECT RECALL OF ALL MY EXPERIENCES.

...BUT HE CAUSED ME A LOT OF TROUBLE IN THE OTHERS. I COULD NEVER GET THROUGH HIS DEFENSES.

HORSE DIDN'T DO MUCH TO STAND OUT IN MY WINNING PATH...

...

HIS WISH SURPRISED ME A LITTLE.

AS FAR AS HIS WISH WAS CONCERNED...

...I THOUGHT HIS DEFENSIVE ABILITY WAS ALREADY PLENTY.

UUMA, THE FIGHTER OF THE HORSE.

"I WISH FOR TALENT."

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO ENTER HORSE'S BANK VAULT?

THAT BARRICADE WAS REALLY TOUGH.

...

THAT WAS SIMPLE.

I HAD A HUNDRED COPIES SEARCHING FOR THE CRACKS.

...BUT NOTHING ELSE WORKED.

I DIDN'T RELISH SACRIFICING **HORSE** TO SAVE MYSELF...

HIDING IN THERE WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD ESCAPE **SNAKE'S** PURSUIT.

I TRIED ASKING THEM ONCE.

...

WHAT ABOUT THE *TATSUMI BROTHERS?* WHAT WERE THEIR WISHES?

MONEY, OF COURSE! ALWAYS MONEY!

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE'LL WISH FOR WHEN WE WIN?

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE WITH MONEY!!

TOUCH ME!!

...THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO THEM THAN THE RUMORS AFTER ALL.

WHEN I HEARD THEIR ANSWER, I THOUGHT...

THE CRIMINAL TWINS WHO WOULD FIGHT IN ANY BATTLE FOR THE MONEY.

MONEY?

BUT LATER—

THAT'S WHY IT'S SO FUN TO WASTE IT.

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE WITH MONEY.

THE ONLY POINT OF GETTING PAID IS FOR MY LITTLE BRO AND ME TO AMUSE OURSELVES.

MONEY'S JUST A NECESSARY SYMBOL...

I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT THE MONEY.

...TO MAKE OUR GAMES FUN.

"I WISH FOR MONEY."

TATSUMI BROTHER, THE YOUNGER, THE FIGHTER OF THE SNAKE.

"I WISH FOR NOTH-ING."

TATSUMI BROTHER, THE ELDER, THE FIGHTER OF THE DRAGON.

NOT **ONCE** DID I AVOID THE ZODIAC WAR.

AND I TRIED REFUSING 100 TIMES.

IT JUST MAKES ME PAINFULLY AWARE OF HOW **POWER-LESS** I AM.

MY **FAILURES** ARE AMPLIFIED A HUNDRED TIMES.

...AND I SUFFERED THE PAIN OF RE-JECTION 100 TIMES.

IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I CONFESSED MY FEELINGS TO MY CRUSH 100 TIMES...

I DON'T WANT TO EXPERI-ENCE THAT HELL AGAIN.

DRAGON WISHED FOR **NOTHING**?

THEN WHY DID HE PARTICIPATE IN THE ZODIAC WAR?

FOR THOSE OF US SELECTED, PARTICIPATION IS ***MANDATORY.***

WE WEREN'T GIVEN THE ***CHOICE*** TO REFUSE.

...MY POWER ISN'T MUCH GOOD FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT PLAYING ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS.

WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT...

BUT IN ANOTHER, WE FOUGHT ON THE SAME SIDE.

ON THIS ROUTE, I NEVER EN-COUNTERED *TIGER*.

...

...A *CAT* AND A *RAT* COULD NEVER GET ALONG.

IF YOU CONSIDER A TIGER AS A KIND OF *CAT*...

THEY WERE WICKED STRONG.

JUST NOT AS WELL AS *OX* AND *TIGER*.

BUT WE WORKED TOGETHER BETTER THAN I THOUGHT WE WOULD.

"I WISH FOR RIGHT-NESS."

TORA, THE FIGHTER OF THE TIGER.

AND SHE SAID...

SHE SURPRISED ME AT FIRST. I ASKED HER WHAT THAT WAS ABOUT.

...BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT, SHE WAS ONE OF THE BEST FIGHTERS.

THE FIGHTER OF THE *TIGER* DIDN'T LOOK LIKE SHE WAS THAT STRONG...

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

WHY DO I MAKE MYSELF LOOK WEAK?

YEAH.

WOBBL~

W-OBBL

...WHO FEEL THEY NEED TO MAKE A SHOW OF STRENGTH.

IT'S ALWAYS THE WEAK ONES...

I ASKED HIM WHAT KIND OF WISH HE HAD...

HE WAS EVERY BIT AS SKILLED AS THE RUMORS SAID.

AND OX WAS THERE FOR HER IN HER FINAL MOMENTS.

HMPH

WHAT DO YOU *FIGHT* FOR? WHAT DO YOU *LIVE* FOR?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO ASK THAT QUESTION, YOU SHOULD ANSWER IT FIRST.

WHAT IS *YOUR* WISH?

I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER READY FOR THAT...

...

...

...HE WANTED A PARTNER HE COULD TRUST TO HAVE HIS BACK ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

BUT IF I WERE TO MAKE A GUESS...

HE NEVER DID TELL ME...

"I WISH TO BE SAVED."

USHII, THE FIGHTER OF THE OX.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK OF THEM NOW.

BUT WHEN I TRIED TO TALK TO THEM, THEY WERE SHOCKINGLY OPEN WITH ME.

...ASIDE FROM *SHARYŪ*, NONE OF THE FIGHTERS WERE GOOD PEOPLE.

LOOKING BACK AT IT...

...THEIR WISHES WERE ALL *NORMAL*.

WHEN I ASKED THEM WHAT THEY WOULD WISH FOR...

...YOU SAY?

MODEST ...

I WAS SURPRISED HOW *MODEST* THEIR WISHES WERE.

OR *COMMON*, MAYBE.

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ME TO WALK YOU UP, NEZUMI?

YEAH, I CAN MAKE IT UPSTAIRS MYSELF.

YAAAAWN...

...

IF YOU SAY THE OTHER FIGHTERS' WISHES WERE MODEST...

HOW *MAJESTIC* YOUR WISH WILL BE!

GR

I'LL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING...

IN

*I'M SURE I **ERASED** ...*

...THE PATH WHERE I TOLD HIM ALL OF THAT.

HM... STRANGE.

...

...OF THE PATHS I ERASE.

... PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE SOME MEMO-RIES...

AH WELL... SOME-TIMES...

UM.

YEAH.

*I GUESS IT DOESN'T MATTER IF **HE** REMEM-BERS.*

...AFTER I'VE THOUGHT OF A HUNDRED.

I'LL MAKE MY WISH...

SWISH

...AND THE 99 OTHERS HE DIDN'T WANT SO MUCH.

...FOR THE ONE WISH HE REALLY WANTED TO COME TRUE...

THE END!

AND THE NEXT DAY...

THE BOY WENT TO THE SCHOOL THAT WAS JUST ANOTHER BATTLE-FIELD TO HIM.

YA

AA

WN

AS HE LIVED 100 LIVES, HE BEGAN HIS SEARCH...

NEZUMI,
THE FIGHTER
OF THE RAT

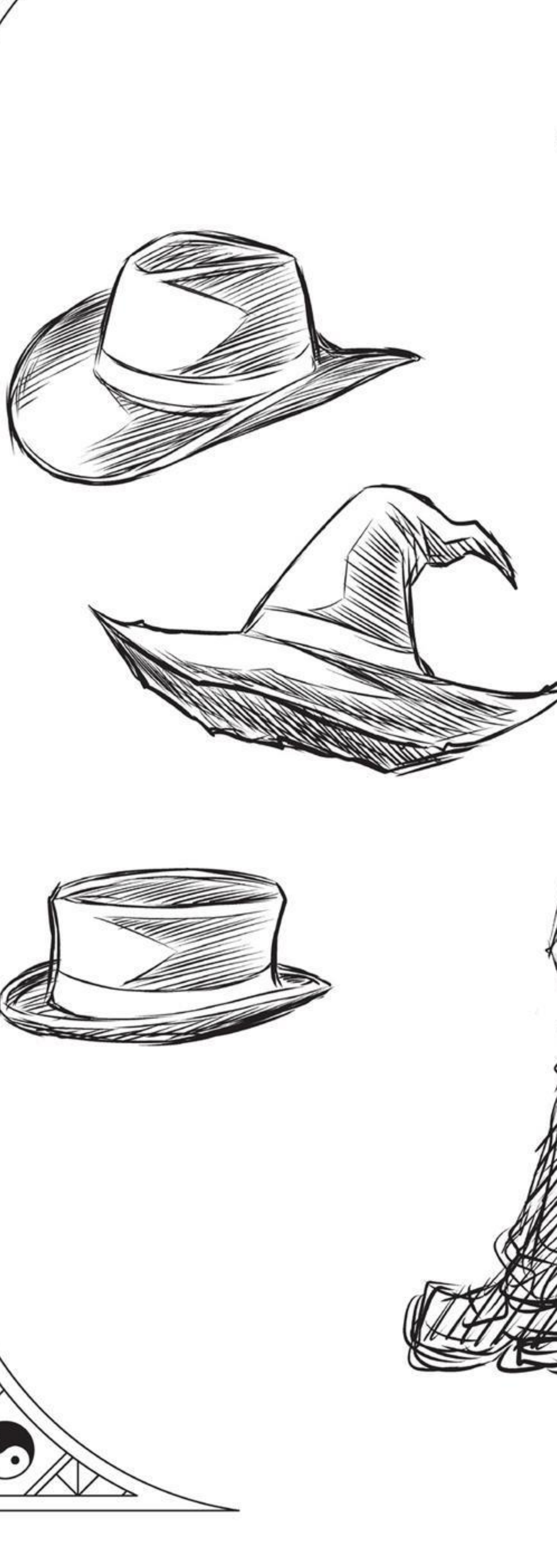
(SCHOOL
UNIFORM
VERSION)





DUODECUPLE

NAVI



His real name is Shūji Mita. He was born on January 11, is 170 centimeters tall, and weighs 58 kilograms. After graduation, he lived without purpose—taking on a part-time job here and there—but two years ago, the organization that runs the Zodiac War abducted him and revealed that he and Duodecuple are related. He also discovered that he possessed a mysterious ability, which led him to become a field reporter. This ability—Copy and Paste—allows him to create unlimited copies of himself that exist simultaneously in the same reality—not as branching paths. The copies aren't separate as they all are him. He retains the memories of all copies, and as long as one survives, he can always make more—a perfect ability for investigating dangerous war zones. Still, he is careful not to overuse this ability, and for good reason. Each simultaneous existence ages his body that much more rapidly and he doesn't have the power to erase a copy (except through the copy's death). In the last two years, his repeated experiences of copying and dying have both deepened his curiosity and created a conflicting timidity.

He collects hats as a hobby. His interest extends to all various kinds of clothing, but he limits his collection because of his employers' strict dress code, which confines his attire to long black coats. He has comparatively more leeway in his hats, however, and is constantly expanding his options for headwear. He hasn't realized that his tastes have been becoming more and more eccentric—he's even started thinking about getting a top hat that can hold a dove inside.

AFTERWORD

When I was asked to adapt *Jūni Taisen: Zodiac War* into a manga, and after I read the original novel, my first thought was, "This book is terrific! But am I capable of re-creating that excitement in a manga?" Then I thought that if I turned down the project because I didn't feel I was up to the task, that would mean that someone else would get to make a manga out of it. That someone else would either re-create the same feeling or they wouldn't, and either way would make me feel bad. And so, with that kind of incredibly selfish (and shoddy) sentiment, I ended up deciding I would just make a go of it and do the best I could do.

Then, when I started work on this project, it was even harder than I imagined! At first, I storyboarded out a plot following Rat as the protagonist, but my editor rejected that immediately (ha ha!). So then I thought I needed a character to carry the reader's point of view, and I came up with Navi, who would serve as a reporter. As a result, the story's events became easier to follow, but sometimes I portrayed events differently from the novel, and inconsistencies could arise between the descriptions of the narrative and the characters' inner thoughts. (*sweats*) After the anime finished, I wanted to surprise people who had already read the novel and watched the anime, so I started doing things like cooking up a back story for the Tatsumi Brothers and having the zombie Monkey be naked. I'm deeply grateful to NISIOISIN for giving me permission to do what I wanted. (*sweats*)

My deep thanks also go out to my editor Yoshida, who gave me valuable advice on interpreting the characters and creating their stories, to Hikaru Nakamura Sensei for designing such delightful characters, to my assistants for meeting my unreasonable demands and producing some seriously intricate background art, to the anime production staff for providing reference material including prop designs, and most of all to my readers for all their support.

And to the twelve fighters who participated in the Zodiac War, thank you all. Being able to draw you was a blast. Thank you!!

My one and only one wish is, "I wish for good health." (*laugh*)

—Akira Akatsuki

Thank you, Akatsuki Sensei, for adapting *Jūni Taisen: Zodiac War* into such a wonderful manga. I'm confident that the readers enjoyed it every bit as much as I did. The story continues in *The One Wish I Really Want to Come True*—and the *Ninety-Nine Others I Don't So Much*, published in my one-shot manga anthology, *Ōgiri*. (Akatsuki Sensei's *Girl in a Box* is also included in that anthology.) I also teamed up with Hikaru Nakamura for a bonus *Zodiac War* manga—six pages included in copies of the first pressing of each *Jūni Taisen: Zodiac War* anime on Blu-ray (collect all six). As for what's next, maybe I'll try to get *Jūni Taisen vs. Jūni Taisen* made into a manga... At this moment, there aren't any concrete plans—just the creator's wishes—but I'd say there's a one in a hundred chance.

—NISIOISIN

This is the final volume of my manga adaptation of *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War*.

When I completed my previous two collaborations with NISIOISIN—*Medaka Box* and *Shōnen Shōjo*—my emotional response could be summed up as, "Thank you!" But this time, I'm wistful more than anything.

I'm not sure, but I think the difference is that the novel already existed as a complete entity by the time I started, and as I worked on this manga it was with a defined end point already set. Maybe it's reminding me of being a student taking part in culture festivals and sports days.

Two other emotions also rank almost equally high—relief at successfully finishing and another "Thank you!" for everyone who encouraged me throughout the serialization. (*laughs*)

Thank you for this fun festival day!

—Akira Akatsuki

AKIRA AKATSUKI

Born 1977, Akira Akatsuki made his manga debut in 2003 with *Z-XL Dai* in *Akamaru Jump*. He later published a number of one shots, such as *Angel Agent*, *Contractor M&Y* and *Little Brave Pukateriosu*, in *Jump the Revolution!*, *Weekly Shonen Jump* and *Akamaru Jump*, respectively. His most notable work and first major collaboration with NISIOISIN, *Medaka Box*, premiered in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 2009 and concluded in 2013. He published two more one shots, *Toshokan Kyuuseishu Kurabu* (*Library Savior Club*) and *Musume Iri-Hako* (*The Girl in the Box*), the latter of which was another collaboration with NISIOISIN, before starting work on *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* in 2017 on *Jump+*.

NISIOISIN

Born 1981. In 2002, NISIOISIN's novel *The Beheading Cycle* won the 23rd Mephisto Prize and became his debut publication. Among his numerous novels are the *Zaregoto* series, the *Monogatari* series, the *Densetsu* series, and the *Bōkyaku Tantei* series. He also wrote the manga tie-in novel *Death Note: Another Note*. As a manga writer, he has appeared in the *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine with his series *Medaka Box* and his *Ōgiri* series of one-shot manga stories have seen the pages of *Weekly Shonen Jump*, *Jump SQ*, *Weekly Young Jump* and *Bessatsu Margaret*.

HIKARU NAKAMURA

Born 1984. Illustrator Hikaru Nakamura made her debut in 2001 with her manga *Kairi no Sue* in the *Monthly Gangan Wing* magazine. Her other works include *Arakawa Under the Bridge*, published in *Young Gangan*, and 2009 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize winner *Saint Young Men*, published in *Monthly Morning Two*. She previously collaborated with NISIOISIN for his *Ōgiri* series with "The One Wish I Really Want to Come True, and the Ninety-Nine Others I Don't So Much."

JUNI TAISEN

ZODIAC WAR

4

SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

MANGA BY
AKIRA AKATSUKI

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NISIOISIN

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
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PARENTAL ADVISORY
JUNI TAISEN: ZODIAC WAR is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence and adult themes.



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